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1793–1800

MEMOIRS OF WILLIAM HAZLITT.

VOLUME I.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHARING CROSS.

MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

WITH PORTIONS OF HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

BY

W. CAREW HAZLITT.
OF THE INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

"Quidquid ex Agricolâ amavimus, quidquid mirati sumus, manet mansurumque est in animis hominum, in æternitate temporum, famâ rerum. Nam multos veterum, velut inglorios et ignobiles, oblivio obruet. Agricola, posteritati narratus et traditus, superstes erit."—TACITUS, *in Vitâ Agricolæ.*

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY.
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
1867.

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1867. May 13

2 vol.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

(Aged 13)

FROM AN ORIGINAL MINIATURE ON IVORY PAINTED BY HIS BROTHER.

TO THE MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER

I DEDICATE RESPECTFULLY

THESE BIOGRAPHICAL COLLECTIONS, CONCERNING

ONE WHOM SHE KNEW

SO WELL.

LEAF OF MOTTOES, &c.

"THROUGH good and ill report, honour and blame,
Steadfast he kept his faith—firmly adhered
To his first creed, nor slight nor censure feared.
The cause hath triumphed—HAZLITT but a name!
What matters it, since HAZLITT'S name shall stand,—
Despite detraction's venom, tyrants' rage,—
The Patriot, Philosopher, and Sage,
High in the annals of his native land!
Oh! say not then that HAZLITT died too soon,
Since he had fought and conquered—though the strife
Cost him his health—his happiness—his life—
Freely he yielded up the noble boon!
He saw the mists of error roll away,
And closed his eyes—but on the rising day."

MRS. BRYAN, 1836.

"I SHOULD BELIE MY OWN CONSCIENCE, IF I SAID LESS, THAN THAT I THINK W. H. TO BE, IN HIS NATURAL AND HEALTHY STATE, ONE OF THE WISEST AND FINEST SPIRITS BREATHING. SO FAR FROM BEING ASHAMED OF THAT INTIMACY WHICH WAS BETWIXT US, IT IS MY BOAST THAT I WAS ABLE FOR SO MANY YEARS TO HAVE PRESERVED IT ENTIRE, AND I THINK I SHALL GO TO MY GRAVE WITHOUT FINDING, OR EXPECTING TO FIND, SUCH ANOTHER COMPANION."

CHARLES LAMB, 1823.

"Without the imagination and extreme facility of Coleridge, he had almost as much subtlety, and far more steadfastness of mind."—BARRY CORNWALL, 1866.

"Dear Hazlitt, whose tact intellectual is such
That it seems to feel truth, as one's fingers do touch,—
Who in politics, arts, metaphysics, poetics,
To critics in these times, are health to cosmetics.

"And nevertheless—or, I rather should say,
For that very reason—can relish boys' play,
And turning, on all sides through pleasures and cares,
Find nothing more precious than laughs and fresh airs."

LEIGH HUNT, 1818.

"What the reader is and feels at the instant, that the author is and feels at all other times. It is stamped upon him at his birth; it only quits him when he dies. His existence is intellectual, *ideal*; it is hard to say he takes no interest in what he is. His passion is beauty; his pursuit is truth."

THE PLAIN SPEAKER, 1826.

"Such was the power of beauty in Hazlitt's mind; and the interfusing faculty was wanting. The spirit, indeed, was willing, but the flesh was strong; and when these contend it is not difficult to foretell which will obtain the mastery; for 'the power of beauty shall sooner transform honesty from what it is into a bawd, than the power of honesty shall transform beauty into its likeness.'"—TALFOURD, 1836.

"I suspect that half which the unobservant have taken literally, he meant, secretly, in sarcasm. As Johnson in conversation, so Hazlitt in books, pushed his own theories to the extreme, partly to show his power, partly, perhaps, from contempt of the logic of his readers. He wrote rather for himself than others; and often seems to vent all his least assured and most uncertain thoughts—as if they troubled him by the doubts they inspired, and his only anxiety was to get rid of them. He had a keen sense of the Beautiful and Subtle; and what is more, he was deeply imbued with sympathies for the Humane. He ranks high amongst the social writers—his intuitive feeling was in favour of the multitude;—yet had he nothing of the demagogue in literature; he did not pander to a single vulgar passion."—LORD LYTTON, 1836.

PREFACE.

THE three sketches prefixed to the 'Literary Remains of William Hazlitt,' 1836, from the pens of the late Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, the present Lord Lytton, and my father, represent all that has been yet given to the world in the direction of my grandfather's biography.

Thirty years have passed. My grandfather has still his admirers. I sometimes permit myself to indulge a belief that their number is on the increase. It might be something to have even to say that it was stationary, that while death kept thinning the ranks, new recruits did not cease to enrol themselves.

I have an opportunity presented to me here of offering to the reading public much that will be new to them, if not much that they will think important. I have introduced occasionally incidents and anecdotes which may appear trivial, but my object in inserting them has merely been in each instance to illustrate, if I could, some trait in a character, which some have wilfully, and more have unconsciously, misinterpreted.

I do not pretend to come forward as a vindicator of my grandfather. I must leave that task to Time and its allied influences. All I have set myself to do is to hold a little light towards one who was an early

political reformer, and a man to whom even his enemies have not denied the possession of rare intellectual gifts.

The savage and paltry slanders which were propagated in his lifetime against him by persons of a particular stamp, whose names it is not worth while to rescue from oblivion, have long since, it is hoped, been estimated at something like their true worth. Mr. Hazlitt rowed against the stream. If he were living now, if he had lived to be old, he would have been rowing with it. The stream, not he, would have turned.

But as Lord Lytton, then Mr. Bulwer, observed in 1836, "he went down to dust without having won the crown for which he had so bravely struggled."

I shall try to divest myself as much as possible of bitterness and indignation in what I have to write, but my feeling beforehand is, that I shall not succeed thoroughly. Strong words will perhaps come, and they will come, if they do, from my heart.

Very few of the men whom my grandfather knew are among us now, and of those the chief proportion were his later acquaintances; his younger admirers (so to speak), not the companions of his prime, nor the witnesses of his earlier trials and triumphs. They did not know him as the great Coleridge did, or as wise and witty Elia; they saw only the sunset.

W. CAREW HAZLITT.

Kensington,
January, 1867.

INTRODUCTORY.

CHARLES LAMB once commenced an epic poem in blank verse, beginning—

Hail, Mackery End!——

and there he stopped. Mr. R. H. Horne, author of several pieces of striking merit and originality in dramatic literature, was to have undertaken a memoir of Mr. Hazlitt, but got no farther than "Man is a stone!" My father at the time (it is thirty years ago) took the liberty of disapproving of the proem, and Mr. Horne threw up his, I believe, self-imposed task.

Mr. Hazlitt's life was peculiarly an intellectual one; and such, in the main, I purpose to regard and treat it. His personal and moral infirmities were the result of several combining circumstances; and his life displayed a continual conflict between a magnificent intellect and morbid, miserly physical influences.

I do not pretend or aspire to furnish a history of the mind of my grandfather; but I cannot help looking at it as part of my business to supply the clue, where I can, to his adoption of certain subjects as the groundworks of his essays.

Not only was the 'Essay on Human Action' the result of an early and deep study of Helvetius and others; but other writings of his, belonging to a later epoch of his life, were more or less direct emanations of the books he had read, and become intellectually imbued with, in his youth. One source of objection and dislike on my grandfather's part to Helvetius and his school, was their opposition in some essential particulars to the philosophical opinions of Rousseau.

Mr. Hazlitt's disquisition on *Self-Love*, printed in the 'Literary Remains,' should be regarded as a sort of sequel to the earlier treatise of 1805; and pretty nearly the same may be said of the lectures on English Philosophy, delivered at the Russell Institution in 1812.

I am anxious to refrain so far as possible from adopting the *tu quoque* line of argument. I desire to keep aloof, here and elsewhere, from recrimination. For instance, one of his disparagers, Haydon, was neither a fortunate nor a happy man. His life is before the world, and everybody who chooses may read it.

Men of the present day can form no adequate conception of the kind of life-and-death struggle it was for people of honest principles and advanced opinions forty or fifty years ago. There were men whom Mr. Hazlitt, and whom the Hunts knew, who were ready to answer for their political creed with their personal liberty, nay, with their necks, if need had been. The need has ceased, and the men have gone. It would not be possible now to assemble such a circle as Mr. John Hunt assembled in his house at Maida Hill; the times are

altered, and the type is extinct. Of Lamb's evenings the same may be said, not from any paucity of intellect and wit amongst modern Englishmen, but from a complete alteration in the intellectual temperature and atmosphere.

Mr. Hazlitt was so far like other men, that he spent his time as the days came according to circumstances, and spent one day in one manner and another day in another. This observation, in the case of most people, might seem unnecessary; but such a deplorable amount of misstatement exists almost on every point of Mr. Hazlitt's private and literary history, that what would be mere trivial detail as regarded others, becomes less impertinent and more material here. One writer has sought to make out that he used to get up at about two in the afternoon, have breakfast, write, and go to the theatre—every day of his life! Another has pictured him at the breakfast-table in the afternoon, and pursuing, according to custom, his literary labours through the silent hours of night! In one quarter we are informed that he was to be seen every evening at the 'Southampton Arms,' that he very seldom dined, but supped instead, and that he wrote in a very large, clear hand, like print, and never made corrections!

It would not be difficult to augment this catalogue of damaging exaggerations (to say the least of them). When we recollect that Mr. Hazlitt's chief delight and only recreation of the kind was the theatre, and that his health was never very excellent, we cannot be excessively surprised that, when he happened to be in

London, and not otherwise engaged, he went to the play, and lay in bed the next morning, all the worse for stopping out late, and perhaps a hot supper at the 'Southampton,' where he liked to go, because it was there that he met Hone, Procter, and other friends and acquaintances. It was the same to him that 'Will's Coffee House' had been long before to Dryden, and the 'Mitre' to Johnson. If there had not been a kind of mania for detecting motives, or *inventing* them for him, on the part of people with whom he mixed, much that he did might have been thought not so particularly strange perhaps, and have been accounted for as naturally as much that other literary men did, could have been.

My grandfather's gait has been described as a *slouch*, as if there was some peculiar felicity in the expression; and, again, as if it was his habitual mode of locomotion. A certain indifference to appearances characterized Mr. Hazlitt in later years, when those who have undertaken to supply pen-and-ink portraits of him knew him chiefly; but in his earlier life he was possessed of remarkable activity and alertness of carriage, and to the last he was a capital pedestrian. Mr. Patmore it is, I think, who describes him as "devouring the ground." A walk to Windsor and back on the same day from London, was the feat of a man who could do something more than "slouch" into a room, and this Mr. Hazlitt accomplished more than once.

He enjoyed the walks down the Oxford Road to Bayswater, where lived the Reynells, intimate and

valued friends. Their house was in Black Lion Lane (now no more), in a large fruit and flower garden, and commanded an unbroken view over the fields as far as Harrow.

My grandfather took his son with him usually, and if he grew tired on the way, carried him pick-a-back. At that time a hedge ran along a good portion of the way, and it was a lonely journey, especially for one so timid as my grandfather.

Authors in clover pasturage are perhaps too apt to give the contemptuous go-by to the members of the fraternity still quartered on the stubble:

Non cuivis contingit adire Corinthum.

It is not everybody who wielded a pen in his youth who can spend the afternoon and evening of life in an elegant, purple-tinted case, forgetting that he, too, was once an inglorious grub.

My grandfather depended upon his literary earnings for his subsistence to the last. If he had placed himself on the right hand of Mr. Speaker, it might have been otherwise; but unfortunately for those whom he left behind him, and for himself, he owned principles for which he had a value, and which in those days were not Government principles. He was too honest a man to leave his creed because it did not pay.

Where men hold back so little of what passes in their minds, or of what their hearts really feel, we seem to owe them this—an indulgent construction upon what they say or what they are pleased to put upon record

against themselves. Mr. Hazlitt's personal confessions, like some of his literary opinions, must be received with allowance. We must not believe all he tells us. Like good archers, we must provide for the wind. There was an amazing amount of wilful extravagance about many of his expressed thoughts—a prevailing vein of paradox and hyperbole, and then, if the world took him at his word, and construed him literally, he was vexed with the world—and with himself. This brings me to speak of the 'Liber Amoris,'—for a mere moment.

It usually happens, in discussions of this kind, that people run into extremes. Some critics at the time decried this volume, and the transaction to which it referred, with a virulence and bitterness which was simply ridiculous, and which, to any unbiassed mind, must appear wholly unwarranted by the circumstances; while a few invite us to admire the vein of poetical passion which breathes in the conversations and in the letters.

Long before this, we are pretty sure, the spirit of detraction and disparagement, which haunted and worried Mr. Hazlitt from the commencement of his career as a *popular* writer, has died down; and if his fame as an author should be thought to depend at all greatly on the possession and exercise of the imaginative faculty, passages upon passages might be produced from his other works eclipsing in richness and strength of fancy any to be found in the 'Liber Amoris.' Many such indeed are scattered through these volumes.

All that I ask for Mr. Hazlitt is respectful forbearance; and that, considering what he suffered, and what

he has left us, he should in this one thing be tenderly and charitably judged.

On his behalf, if any new plea were capable of being urged, it would be this: that his irrepressible love of truth, and abhorrence of disguise in any shape or under any circumstances, have been the means of laying bare before us much that other men would have shrunk instinctively from divulging. We are bound to recollect that he has opened his whole heart to us; and allowances are to be made for that confessed addiction to taking the extreme view and sailing over-closely to the wind.

The works of William Hazlitt abound with autobiography. There are so many passages where he explains his own feelings, his own views, his own opinions, and his own conduct so much better than I could explain them, that I have preferred to stand aside as often as I could in these instances, and let him speak for himself, in his own language, without a word or a syllable altered, added, or taken away. In taking this course, I have confined myself almost exclusively to those details which are of a strictly personal nature.

His brain was as clear as crystal, but not, as crystal, cold. His was a mind of intense and vast sensibilities, susceptible of the most violent nervous fluctuations, and of a voluptuous temperament.

It opened itself willingly to pleasurable impressions. It was of an Epicurean complexion. The instincts and impulses of the flesh had their share in governing it, and perhaps it was too large a share.

I wish to find room for these following observations of the late Mr. Justice Talfourd:—

"Coleridge and Wordsworth were not moderns to him; for he knew them in his youth, which was his own antiquity, and the feelings which were the germ of their poetry had sunk deep into his heart. His personal acquaintance with them was broken before he became known to the world as an author, and he sometimes alluded to them with bitterness; but he, and he alone, has done justice to the immortal works of the one, and the genius of the other. The very prominence which he gave to them as objects of attack, at a time when it was the fashion to pour contempt on their names—when the public echoed those articles of the 'Edinburgh Review' upon them, which they now regard with wonder as the curiosities of criticism—proved what they still were to him; and, in the midst of those attacks, there are involuntary confessions of their influence over his mind, are touches of admiration, heightened by fond regret, which speak more than his elaborate eulogies upon them in his 'Spirit of the Age.'

"Surely those books on which Hazlitt has expatiated with true regard, have assumed, to our apprehensions, a stouter reality since we surveyed them through the medium of his mind. In general, the effect of criticism, even when fairly and tenderly applied, is the reverse of this; for the very process of subjecting the creations of the poet and the novelist to examination as works of art, and of estimating the force of passion or of habit, as exemplified in them, so necessarily implies that they

are but the shadows of thought, as insensibly to dissipate the illusion which our dreamy youth had perchance cast around them. But in all that Hazlitt has written on old English authors, he is seldom merely critical. His masterly exposition of that huge book of fantastical fallacies, the vaunted 'Arcadia' of Sir Philip Sidney, stands almost alone in his works as a specimen of the mere power of unerring dissection and impartial judgment. In the laboratory of his intellect, analysis was turned to the sweet uses of alchemy."

The Recollections of William Hazlitt, in Mr. P. G. Patmore's 'Friends and Acquaintances,' 1854, had originally been printed (in substance) in 'Jerrold's Shilling Magazine,' shortly after Mr. Hazlitt's death. There is in another section of Mr. Patmore's book a note from Lady Blessington to him in reference to them upon their first appearance in this shape:—

"My dear Mr. Patmore,

"I have been reading with great interest and pleasure your 'Recollections' of Hazlitt. They are full of fine tact and perception, as well as a healthy philosophy. I wish all men of genius had such biographers —men who, alive to their powers of mind, could look with charity and toleration on their failings. Your 'Recollections' of him made me very sad, for they explained much that I had not previously comprehended in his troubled life. How he must have suffered!

"What a clever production 'Jerrold's Magazine' is,

and how admirable are his own contributions! Such writings *must* effect good.

"Very sincerely yours,

"M. BLESSINGTON."

Of the paintings executed by Mr. Hazlitt from 1800, the annexed is the most perfect catalogue I can at present offer:—

Circa 1800.

1. King Lear—head and shoulders, small size. *Original.*

1802.

2. Titian's Mistress. *After Titian.*
3. Hippolyto de Medici. *After Titian.*
4. The Young Man with the Glove. *After Titian.*
5. The Death of Clorinda. *After Lodovic Lana.*
6. The Transfiguration. *After Raphael.*
7. Christ Crowned with Thorns. *After Guido.*

1803.

8. A portrait of Wordsworth the Poet. *Original.*

*** Never finished.

9. A portrait of Hartley Coleridge. *Original.*
10. The Old Cottager—head and shoulders. *Original.*
11. The Rev. Dr. Shepherd, of Gateacre. *Original.*
12. A Manchester Manufacturer.
13. Sir Joshua Reynolds—half-length. *A copy.*

1804.

14. The Rev. W. Hazlitt, A.M. *Original.*

1805.

15. Charles Lamb. *Original.*

Circa 1825.

16. Portrait of himself—head and shoulders, painted on the back of a book. *Original.*

I may pass from the portraits done by him to those which have been done of him.

These are tolerably numerous, and range in date between 1783 and 1825 (*circâ*). The earliest likeness of him which the family possesses was painted on ivory in brooch-size while he was in America with his father and mother. The next in order of time is a miniature, three-quarter size, painted in 1791 by John Hazlitt. He was then thirteen: the resemblance between it and the former are so strikingly powerful, that each seems to corroborate the fidelity of the other, having been from different hands. His brother also took him in oils, three-quarter size, at the ages of nineteen and thirty, and also on ivory, in miniature, about 1808.

The chalk drawing by Bewick is well known. It was taken in Scotland in 1822, I have understood, and Mr. Hazlitt was much pleased with it. But it was not a very faithful likeness, though the general effect is good, and sufficiently true to the original to enable anybody who knew him to tell at a glance for whom the portrait was intended. But it is unnecessary to insist upon the fact, that art requires a good deal more than this, and nobody was better aware of it than Mr. Bewick's sitter.

He sat to Bewick, however, several times.

It exhibits him without a neckcloth, and with his hair straggling, and just beginning to be thin over the temples. This was as it should have been, so far; for Mr. Hazlitt seldom wore a neckerchief in the house.

An attempt to paint himself was made late in life. He sat opposite a looking-glass, and drew himself to the shoulders, and afterwards coloured the drawing, the

back of a book serving him for an easel. The likeness, which *is* in a manner like, is the most *curious*, if not the most valuable, of the portraits; it is still in my possession. Here, too, the neckcloth is missing. I should attribute its execution to the period between 1825 and 1828; but this is mere conjecture. It represents him, at any rate, with his hair cropped, and he did not wear his hair short till it turned grey, about the time of his visit to France and Italy in 1824–5.

From the cast taken by Mr. Horne after the death of Mr. Hazlitt, and one or two of the portraits of him taken at different periods, Mr. Joseph Durham, the eminent sculptor, executed a bust, which Mr. and Mrs. Procter, who knew the original intimately, pronounce a happy and close likeness. There were four copies made, of which three were reserved by the family.

I am told that Mr. Hazlitt contributed for a short time to the 'Taunton Courier' while Mr. Marriott had it. Probably his connexion with it arose from his friendship with Mr. John Hunt, who for some years was settled at Taunton.

The pamphlet entitled 'Don John; or Don Juan Unmasked—being a Key to the Mystery attending that remarkable Publication, &c.,' was published in 1819 by William Hone, and was, ridiculously enough, supposed and asserted to be Mr. Hazlitt's. It has not a trace of his style, and he had assuredly as much hand in its authorship as he had in that of 'Don Juan' itself.

I must also disclaim on his behalf 'The Dramatic Scorpion' (!!) and 'A Selection of Speeches made at County Elections during the years 1820 and 1821.'

The person to whom perhaps I owe most, next to Mr. Hazlitt's own autobiographical passages, has unhappily not lived to witness the practical fruits of her frequent communications to me of facts and anecdotes, some of which she had from my grandfather's own lips, and which she handed down through me often in the very words and forms of expression the original speaker had employed. I refer to my mother. Her retentive and accurate memory has saved from oblivion much that appears in these pages respecting Mr. Hazlitt and his opinions of men and things.

Next to my mother, I thank my uncle, C. W. Reynell, Esq., of Putney, the life-long friend of the late Leigh Hunt, who died at his house in 1859. Mr. Reynell's father, Mr. C. H. Reynell, and Mr. John Hunt, Leigh Hunt's elder brother, married two sisters.* I have also derived assistance from my mother's sister, Miss Reynell.

Samuel Hazlitt, Esq., of Featherd, near Tipperary, deserves my cordial recognition of the zeal with which he instituted, at my request, a series of inquiries in the neighbourhood of Shrone-Hill, and personally examined for me the inscriptions in the churchyard there.

To John Alexander, Esq., I am under very consider-

* The Misses Hammond, of Hounslow. The family was originally, however, from Woodbridge, in Suffolk.

able obligations, for that gentleman procured for me a thorough research into the registers of the University of Glasgow, with a view to ascertaining some very material dates.

I have to thank Edward A. McDermott, Esq., secretary of the Russell Institution, for forwarding to me *verbatim* copies of all the existing papers in the archives of that establishment respecting Mr. Hazlitt's Course of Lectures there in 1812.

I also desire to make public my feelings of gratitude for the friendly and courteous manner in which my inquiries have been met by Sir Percy Shelley, Bart.; the Rev. J. A. Hessey, D.C.L.; H. Taylor, Esq.; Alexander Ireland, Esq.; Samuel Redgrave, Esq.; Robert Bell, Esq.; Huntly Gordon, Esq.; J. Payne Collier, Esq., F.S.A.; and F. W. Cosens, Esq.

JOHN HAZLITT ceased to be an exhibitor at the Royal Academy in 1819. He moved from one place to another afterwards, till in 1832 he retired finally to Stockton, where he died in 1837, in his seventieth year.

In 1809, John Hazlitt's name appears among those who, upon the establishment of the British Institution, applied for permission to copy the old masters. I have never heard that he actually availed himself of the opportunity, but he painted portraits in his later years. He had been for one-and-twenty years a painter and exhibitor of miniatures at this time, and perhaps he was beginning to feel a decline in his powers of eyesight.

He was a strongly-built man, below the middle height. He never wrote any work, but he had literary tastes and good judgment, and at one time he moved in an excellent and wide circle. In politics he was, like his brother, an extreme Liberal, and also, like him, remained one.

"No young man believes he shall ever die," was a saying of his, and is quoted by my grandfather as such in an 'Essay on the Feeling of Immortality in Youth.'

MRS. HAZLITT, the first wife of William Hazlitt, died in 1842–3, and was buried in the churchyard of St. John's, Abingdon Street, Millbank. She lived latterly, and died, at Mrs. Penny's, No. 4, Palace Street, Pimlico.

PEGGY HAZLITT, the author's only sister, died at Liverpool, in 1844, at the house of the Rev. J. Johns, and lies buried there.

CHRONOLOGICAL CATALOGUE

OF THE

WORKS OF WILLIAM HAZLITT.

1805.

An Essay on the Principles of Human Actions: Being an Argument in favour of the Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind. To which are added, Some Remarks on the Systems of Hartley and Helvetius. London: Printed for J. Johnson, No. 72, St. Paul's Churchyard, 1805. 8vo., pp. 264 and title.

*** This was commenced in 1797–8, and finished in 1804.

1806.

Free Thoughts on Public Affairs; or, Advice to a Patriot. In a Letter to a Member of the Old Opposition. London: Printed by R. Taylor and Co., Shoe Lane; and sold by J. Budd, Crown and Mitre, Pall Mall. 1806. 8vo., pp. 46 and title.

1807.

1. A Reply to the Essay on Population. By the Rev. T. R. Malthus. In a Series of Letters. To which are added, Extracts from the Essay, with Notes. London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster Row, 1807. 8vo., pp. 378 and title.

*** Criticised in the *Edinburgh Review* for August, 1810. Letters 1–3 were first printed in Cobbett's *Register*.

2. An Abridgment of the Light of Nature Pursued. By Abraham Tucker, Esq. Originally published in seven

volumes, under the name of Edward Search, Esq. London: Printed for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Churchyard, by T. Bensley, Bolt Court, 1807. 8vo., pp. 530, exclusively of pp. 52 of prefixes.

*** Finished in the early part of 1806.

3. The Eloquence of the British Senate; or, Select Specimens from the Speeches of the Most Distinguished Parliamentary Speakers. From the Beginning of the Reign of Charles I. to the Present Time. With Notes, Biographical, Critical, and Explanatory. Two volumes. London: Printed for Thomas Ostell, No. 3, Ave Maria Lane, Ludgate Street, 1807. 8vo., Vol. I., pp. 534; Vol. II., pp. 594.

1808.

Tableau de l'Espagne Moderne. Par J. Fr. Bourgoing. Paris, 1807. 8vo., 3 vols. Translated and abridged by W. Hazlitt. *Not printed.*

1810.

1. A New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue: For the Use of Schools. In which the Genius of our Speech is especially attended to, and the Discoveries of Mr. Horne Tooke and other Modern Writers on the Formation of Language are for the first time incorporated. By William Hazlitt, Author of an Essay on the Principles of Human Action, &c., &c. To which is added A New Guide to the English Tongue, in a Letter to Mr. W. F. Mylnes, Author of the School Dictionary. By Edward Baldwin [W. Godwin], Esq. 1810. 12mo.

*** Commenced (?) and finished in 1808. In the year 1810 Godwin published an abridgment of the 'Grammar.'

2. Mr. Malthus and the Edinburgh Reviewers. Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register* for Nov., 1810.

1812.

Lectures (X.) on the English Philosophers and Metaphysicians. Delivered at the Russell Institution on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 1812, and the nine following Tuesdays.

*** Partly printed in the *Literary Remains;* but the greater portion has perished in MS.

1813.

Contributions to the *Morning Chronicle* (political).

1814.

1. Contributions to the same (political and dramatic).
2. On Wordsworth's 'Excursion.' *Examiner*, 1814.
3. On Dunlop's 'History of Fiction.' *Edinburgh Review*, Nov., 1814.
4. Whether the Fine Arts are promoted by Academies? *Champion*, Aug. 18, and Sept. 11, 1814.
5. Letter in Defence of the same. *Ibid.*, Oct 2, 1814.

1815.

1. THE ROUND TABLE *commenced.* *Examiner*, Jan., 1815.
2. On Madame D'Arblay's 'Wanderer.' *Edin. Review*, Feb., 1815.
3. On Sismondi's 'Literature of the South of Europe.' *Ibid.*, June, 1815.
4. Miscellaneous Contributions to the *Examiner*.
5. Dramatic and Miscellaneous Papers in the *Champion*.

*** Among these was the series of articles 'On the Ideal' in the *Champion* for Jan. 8, April 20, and Nov. 6, 1815; and articles on subjects connected with the fine arts, Feb. 5, 12 and 19.

1816.

1. Memoirs of the late Thomas Holcroft. Written by Himself, and continued to the Time of his Death, from his Diary, Notes, and other Papers [by W. Hazlitt]. London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Orme, Rees, and Brown, Paternoster Row, 1816. 12mo., 3 vols., with a portrait. Reprinted (abridged) in 1852. 8vo. The 4th volume was never published.

*** Finished in 1810.

2. The Round Table *continued.* *Examiner*, 1816.
3. On the 'Catalogue Raisonnée of the British Institution. *Ibid.*
4. Contributions to the *Champion*.

5. On Schlegel's 'Lectures on Dramatic Literature.' *Edin. Review*, Feb., 1816.
6. On Leigh Hunt's 'Rimini.' *Ibid.*, June, 1816.
7. On Mr. Coleridge's 'Lay Sermon.' *Examiner*, Sept. 8, 1816.
8. On Mr. Coleridge's Statesman's Manual. *Ibid.* Dec. 29, 1816.

1817.

1. The Round Table *concluded*. *Examiner*, Jan., 1817.
2. The Round Table: A Collection of Essays on Literature, Men, and Manners. By William Hazlitt. Edinburgh: Printed by Archibald Constable and Co., for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London, 1817. 12mo., 2 vols.

*** Thirteen articles in this work were from other pens. There was a third edition in 1841, 12mo.

3. Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. By William Hazlitt. "For I am nothing if not critical." London: Printed by C. H. Reynell, 21, Piccadilly, 1817. 8vo., pp. 352. Second Edition, 1818. 8vo. Third Edition, Boston, U. S., 1818. 8vo. Fourth Edition, 1838. Small 8vo. Fifth Edition, 1848. Small 8vo. Sixth Edition, 1858. Small 8vo. There have been also one or two more American Editions.
4. On Mr. Coleridge's 'Lay Sermon.' *Examiner*, Jan. 12, 1817.
5. Political Contributions to the *Examiner* and *Morning Chronicle*.
6. On West's Picture of 'Death on the Pale Horse.' *Scots' Magazine*, 1817.
7. On Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. *Edinburgh Review*.

*** This I omitted to notice in its place. It has been improperly attributed to Lord Jeffrey.

1818.

1. Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. Second Edition. London, 1818. 8vo., price 10*s.* 6*d.*
2. Lectures (VIII.) on the English Poets. Delivered at the Surrey Institution. By William Hazlitt. London, 1818. 8vo., pp. 338.
3. Contributions to the *Yellow Dwarf*, January—May, 1818.

*** Most, if not all, of these were republished in 'Political Essays,' 1819.

4. On West's 'Christ Crucified.' *Champion*, June 16, 1818.
5. On the Question whether Pope was a poet? *Scots' Magazine*, Feb. 1818.
6. On Walpole's 'Letters.' *Edin. Review*, Dec., 1818.

1819.

1. A Letter to William Gifford, Esq., from William Hazlitt, Esq. *Fit pugil, et medicum urget.* London: Printed for John Miller, Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly, 1819. Price Three Shillings. 8vo., pp. 88.
2. Lectures on the English Poets. Second Edition. London, 1819. 8vo.
3. Lectures on the English Comic Writers. Delivered at the Surrey Institution. By William Hazlitt. London, 1819. 8vo., pp. 348.
4. Political Essays, with Sketches of Public Characters. By William Hazlitt. "Come, draw the curtain, show the picture." London: Printed for William Hone, 45, Ludgate Hill, 1819. 8vo., pp. 440, and pp. 36 of Introduction, &c.

*** Here some of the original matter in the 'Eloquence of the British Senate' (1807), will be found reproduced, also, some of the Letters from the 'Reply to Malthus,' 1807.

5. Contributions to the *Scots' Magazine*, viz.:—(*a.*) Historical Illustrations of Shakespeare (January, 1819). (*b.*) On the Criminal Law of Punishment by Death (March, 1819).

1820.

1. Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth. Delivered at the Surrey Institution. By William Hazlitt. London, 1820. 8vo., pp. 362.
2. On Farington's 'Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds.' *Edin. Review.* August, 1820.
3. On the Parliamentary Report on Criminal Law. *Scots' Magazine*, Jan., 1820.

1821.

1. A View of the English Stage; or, a Series of Dramatic Criticisms. London, 1821. 8vo.

*** Reprinted from the columns of the *Morning Chronicle*, &c., 1814–17.

2. On Consistency of Opinion.
3. Contributions to the *London Magazine*.
4. Table-Talk; or, Original Essays. London, 1821. 8vo.

*** Partly reprinted from the *London Magazine*.

5. Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth. Second Edition. London, 1821. 8vo.
6. A Defence of Guy Faux, with some Observations on Heroism. *Examiner*, 1821.

1822.

1. Table-Talk; or, Original Essays. Vol. II. London, 1822. 8vo.
2. Lectures (2) delivered at Glasgow, May 6 and 13, 1822. *Not printed.*
3. On the Spirit of Monarchy. *Liberal*, 1822.
4. My First Acquaintance with Poets. *Ibid.*
5. Arguing in a Circle. *Ibid.*
6. On Williams' 'Views in Greece.' *Edinburgh Magazine*, 1822.
7. Political Essays. A reissue (?). London, 1822. 8vo.
8. The Fight. *New Monthly Magazine*, 1822.
9. On Byron's *Sardanapalus*. *Edinburgh Review*.

1823.

1. Characteristics: In the Manner of Rochefoucault's Maxims. London, 1823. 12mo. Second Edition, n.d. 12mo.
2. Liber Amoris; or, the New Pygmalion. London, 1823. 8vo. With an engraved title.
3. The Periodical Press. *Edinburgh Review*, May, 1823.
4. A Letter to the Editor of the *London Magazine*.
5. Pulpit Oratory: Dr. Chalmers and Mr. Irving. *Liberal*, 1823.
6. On the Scotch Character. *Ibid.*

1824.

1. Sketches of the Principal Picture Galleries in England, with a Criticism on "Marriage à-la-Mode." London, 1824. 8vo.

*** Partly republished from the *London Magazine*.

2. On the Fine Arts. *Encyclopædia Britannica Suppl.*, 1824,

*** Based on the early fine-art papers in the *Champion*. He also gave to the *E. B.* five or six biographies (Barry, &c.) under the signature "Z."

3. On Shelley's 'Posthumous Poems.' *Edinburgh Review*. July, 1824.
4. Common Places. *Literary Examiner*.
5. Contributions to the *New Monthly Magazine*.
6. Table-Talk, &c. Second Edition. 1824. 8vo., 2 vols.
7. On Lady Morgan's 'Life of Salvator Rosa.' *Edinburgh Review*.
8. Notes of a Journey through France and Italy *commenced*. *Morning Chronicle*.

1825.

1. The Spirit of the Age; or, Contemporary Portraits. London, 1825. 8vo.

*** Partly republished from the *New Monthly Magazine*.

2. Elegant Extracts [in prose and verse, from the English poets, living and dead]. 1825. 8vo.
3. The same, with a new title, a frontispiece, and the living poets omitted (in consequence of a breach of copyright and threatened proceedings). 1825. 8vo. The reissue was called 'Select Poets of Great Britain: to which are prefixed Critical Notices of each Author.'

*** The joint compilation of two or three persons; Mr. Hazlitt did some of the poets, his son some, Lamb some, Mr. Procter some, and so on. See the Life under 1825.

4. Table Talk, &c., Paris, *Galignani*, 1825. 8vo.

*** A selection from the London 'Table Talk' and the 'Plain Speaker.'

5. Notes of a Journey, &c., *continued*. *Morning Chronicle*.

1826.

1. Notes of a Journey, &c., *collected and published*. London, 1826. 8vo.
2. The Plain Speaker: Opinions on Books, Men, and Things. 1826. 8vo., 2 vols.
3. Contributions to the *New Monthly Magazine*.

*** 'On Persons one would wish to have seen,' 'Boswell Redivivus,' Nos. 1–4, &c.

4. Contributions to the *Examiner*.

1827.

1. Contributions to the *New Monthly Magazine.*

*** 'Boswell Redivivus,' Nos 5 and 6, &c.

2. Contributions to *London Weekly Review* (Richardson's).

*** 'Queries and Answers, or the Rule of Contrary,' &c.

3. The Dandy-School. *Examiner*, 1827.

1828.

1. The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte. Vols. I. and II. London, 1828. 8vo.

*** This work, completed in 4 volumes, has had translations in French and Dutch.

2. On Public Opinion. *London Weekly Review*, 1828.
3. On Personal Identity. *New Monthly Magazine*, 1828.
4. Project for a New Theory of Civil and Criminal Legislation (1828). *Literary Remains*, 1836.

*** The first draft of this was prepared in 1792.

5. A Farewell to Essay-Writing.
6. On the Causes of Popular Opinion. *London Weekly Review* (February).
7. Byron and Wordsworth. *Ibid.* (April).

1829.

1. On Flaxman's 'Lectures on Sculpture.' *Edinburgh Review.*
2. On English Grammar. *Atlas*, 1829.
3. On the Riches of Language. *Ibid.*
4. On Poetical Diction. *Ibid.*
5. On Phrenology. *Ibid.*
6. Prose Album. *New Monthly Magazine.*

1830.

1. The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte. Vols. III. and IV. London, 1830. 8vo.

*** In most copies the title-pages of vols. I. and II. are reprinted with the original date 1828 altered to 1830.

2. The Life of Titian. By James Northcote, R.A. London, 1830. 8vo., 2 vols.

*** The joint production of Northcote, Mr. Hazlitt, and his son.

3. The Conversations of James Northcote, R.A. By William Hazlitt. London, 1830. 8vo.

*** Republished, with additions and alterations, from the 'Boswell Redivivus' (*New Monthly Magazine*).

4. On Wilson's 'Life of Defoe.' *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1830.
5. On Party Spirit. *Atlas*, 1830.
6. The Free Admission. *New Monthly Magazine*, 1830.
7. The Sick Chamber. *Ibid.* (August).
8. Personal Politics (1830). *Literary Remains*, 1836.

*** His last Essay.

1831.

1. On the Punishment by Death. *Fraser's Magazine.*

*** Imperfectly printed, the text mutilated.

2. On the Emancipation of the Jews. Leigh Hunt's *Tatler* (March) and *Daily News* (1849).

1836.

Literary Remains of the Late William Hazlitt; with a Notice of his Life, by his Son; and Thoughts on his Genius and Writings, by E. L. Bulwer and Mr. Serjeant Talfourd. 1836. 8vo. 2 vols. With a portrait after an original drawing by Bewick.

1837.

Characteristics, &c. Third Edition. Edited by R. H. Horne. 1837. Small 8vo.

1838.

Painting and the Fine Arts; being the Articles under those heads contributed to the Seventh Edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' by B. R. Haydon, Esq., and W. Hazlitt, Esq. 1838. 8vo.

1839.

Sketches and Essays. By William Hazlitt. Now first collected by his Son. 1839. Small 8vo., pp. 370.

1840.

Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth. Third Edition. 1840. Foolscap 8vo.

1841.

Lectures on the English Poets. Third Edition. 1841. Foolscap 8vo.

Lectures on the English Comic Writers. Third Edition. 1841. Foolscap 8vo.

1843.

Criticisms on Art; and Sketches of the Picture Galleries of England. By William Hazlitt. With Catalogues of the Principal Galleries. Now first collected. Edited by his Son. 1843. Small 8vo.

*** The 'Sketches' published in 1823, with large additions.

1844.

Criticisms on Art. Second Series. 1844. Foolscap 8vo.

1845-6.

Table Talk, &c. Third Edition. 2 vols, foolscap 8vo. 1845-6.

1850.

Winterslow: Essays and Characters written there. Edited by his Son.

1851.

1. Criticisms and Dramatic Essays on the English Stage. Edited by his Son. 1851. Foolscap 8vo.

*** A reprint, with additions, of 'A View of the English Stage,' 1821, pp. 324.

2. The Plain Speaker. Second Edition. 2 vols., foolscap 8vo. 1851.

1852.

1. Men and Manners: Sketches and Essays. By William Hazlitt, 1852. Small 8vo., pp. 318.

   *** A reprint, with the omission of the 'Essay on Self-love,' of 'Sketches and Essays,' 1839.

2. The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte. A New Edition. 1852. 4 vols., crown 8vo. With portraits, &c.

1857.

Table Talk, &c. Fourth Edition. 2 vols., foolscap 8vo. 1857. With additions.

1858.

1. The Spirit of the Age, &c. 1858. Foolscap 8vo. Third Edition.
2. Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. Foolscap 8vo. 1858. Sixth Edition.

MSS.

1. On Avarice.
2. Outlines of Morals.
3. Outlines of the Human Mind.
4. Political Economy.
5. Outlines of Grammar.

The Season of Autumn, as connected with Human Feelings and Changes. A Sermon, occasioned by the Death of William Hazlitt. Delivered at Crediton, on Sunday, October 10, 1830. By J. Johns. London, 1830. 8vo., pp. 26.

MEMOIRS, &c.

Book I.—1778–1811.

CHAPTER I.

1778–90.

The Foundations—The Hazlitts in Ireland—Migration from the North—John Hazlitt of Shrone-Hill—His family and pursuits—Early years of William Hazlitt.

In the reign of his Majesty King George the First there migrated from the North of Ireland, and from the county of Antrim (as it is traditionally reported), two Irish Protestants. They came to settle in Tipperary, and near the town of Tipperary, namely at Shronell (so pronounced, but spelled Shrone-Hill), they found a new home, where, perhaps, they were enabled to pursue their respective vocations more peacefully than they had done farther northward.

One of these persons was a flax-factor; of the other, the precise occupation has not been handed down. The name of the flax-factor was John Hazlitt; the name of his companion was John Damer.

They were both young men when they came to Shronell, I collect; for John Hazlitt, at all events,

could scarcely have been married when he set up this flax business. His eldest son was born at Shronell on the 18th of April, 1737, and was named William. He had a second son James, who appears to have been William's junior by some years. Whether there were other sons, I cannot find; but there were several daughters, of whom two were christened Sara and Maria.

The registers of Shronell are so imperfect, and the Hazlitts of Ireland have been so negligent in preserving records of their family history, that I despair of discovering farther particulars of John Hazlitt of Shronell. He lies buried in the churchyard of that place, and with him are some of his children, and that John Damer who had accompanied him from his native town.

I assume that the affairs of Mr. Hazlitt of Shronell (as I must call him for the sake of distinction) progressed not unfavourably, and that he was a person of somewhat superior views. It was his wife's particular ambition, too, that William should be brought up to the Church. Accordingly, in 1756, in his nineteenth year, William Hazlitt of Shronell was sent to the University of Glasgow,* where he had the good fortune to

* The expenses of an education at Glasgow at that period were about 20*l.* of our money, and a person could live very fairly at Glasgow upon seven or eight shillings a week. The presence of two of his sons at the University, therefore, by no means necessarily implies that Mr. Hazlitt of Shronell was the possessor of large means; but it does seem to imply that he wished his children to reap certain advantages of mental culture not to be had nearer home in his day, and to get a step higher in the world than he was.

be contemporary with Adam Smith. He matriculated on the 13th November the same year, and the following are the exact terms of the original entry in the university books:—

"*Nov.* 13, 1756.—Logic Class. Prof. James Clow, A.M. Gulielmus Hazelitt, filius natus maximus Joannis. mercatoris in comitatu de Tipperary."

The books of graduates from 1730 to 1762 have disappeared, and it cannot therefore be ascertained with similar precision when he took his degree of *Artium Magister*. But it must have been about 1761.

His brother James was also educated at Glasgow. He matriculated on the 13th November, 1762, and got his A.M. on the 21st May, 1767. I am tempted to furnish the entries as they stand:—

"*Nov.* 13, 1762.—Logic Class. Prof. James Clow. Jacobus Hazelitt, filius natus secundus Joannis, mercatoris in par. de Shronhill in com. Tipperary."

"[A. M.] Jacobus Hazelitt, Hibernus, Maii 21mo. 1767."*

Having graduated at Glasgow, as we may with a certainty of not being far from the truth assume, in 1761, William Hazlitt joined the Unitarians, and crossed over to England—the first of the race and name who had tried to find a home on English ground.

He was a man of inflexible probity, solid erudition, equal charity of feeling and practice, and of a decidedly

* The descendants of James Hazlitt, William's younger brother, still remain in Tipperary, but they have left Shrone-Hill, and are settled at Featherd, three miles away. James lived by the proceeds of a tan-yard, which he kept at Shrone-Hill.

intellectual bent of mind, but of peculiarly unaspiring temperament, humble in his tastes, as he was in his fortunes: a very fair pattern of an old English pastor. He delighted to "browse upon folios of the Fathers," and to walk in his garden, looking after his turnips and brocoli, and watering his peas; and sometimes he strolled into the adjoining fields. For nearly all his long life was passed in the country, in charge of Unitarian congregations here or there. For a short time, about 1785, I find him living in or near the metropolis.

If ever there was a career which was blameless, placid, and consoling in retrospect, it was this poor and good old man's. I shall beg to reserve for another opportunity, and a greater pen than this, the task of more closely and graphically delineating his character, and of picturing him for us as he was.

His first appointment to the ministry was at Wisbeach, in Cambridgeshire, whither he proceeded in 1764, being then twenty-seven years of age. He made here the acquaintance of Mr. Loftus, a farmer in the neighbourhood, towards whose daughter Grace he gradually formed an attachment. The liking seems to have been reciprocal, and in 1766 they were married. Miss Loftus was nine years his junior. She was a very handsome girl, bred and brought up in an unpretending way, and proved an affectionate wife and parent.

Even before his marriage he had resigned his charge at Wisbeach, and was transferred to Marshfield, in Gloucestershire, where a son was born to him in 1767.

This son was christened John, perhaps after John Hazlitt of Shrone-Hill.

The Hazlitts remained at Marshfield till 1770-1, when they shifted their quarters once more, this time to Maidstone, in Kent. The family threatened to be a grave incumbrance on the minister's scanty income; a daughter, Peggy, had been born since John, and other children succeeded in the fulness of time. The latter however died young, with a single exception, and it was an important one.

It was their youngest of all, who, with John and Peggy, was spared to them. They called him William, after his father, and he was born in Mitre Lane, Maidstone, on the 10th April, 1778.

They remained at Maidstone two years longer, and Mr. Hazlitt appears during his residence in the town to have been highly respected for his virtues and his learning. He enjoyed the acquaintance of Dr. Franklin. He corresponded with Dr. Priestley and with Dr. Priestley's friend, Dr. Price. The Rev. Dr. Caleb Fleming was also a friend of his at the same period.

He left Maidstone in 1780 to return to Ireland, where he had accepted a preferment; it was to preside over a congregation of Unitarians at Bandon, in the county of Cork. He was settled here three years—"during which time," observes a writer in the *Monthly Repository* "(as he had always shown himself a zealous advocate for American independence) he exerted himself in behalf of the American prisoners confined at Kinsale, near that town. . . ."

"On the conclusion of the war with America," continues the same authority,* "he removed from Bandon to New York, with his wife and family, where he arrived in May, 1783, and soon proceeded to Philadelphia; and on his way to that city, the Assembly of the States-General for New Jersey, then sitting at Burlington, sent a deputation to invite him to preach before them, with which he complied. At Philadelphia he stayed fifteen months, and besides preaching occasionally at various places of worship there, he delivered during the winter, in the college, a course of Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity. . . ."

Mr. Hazlitt made a short stay at Boston, where he founded the first Unitarian Church, and here he declined the proffered diploma of D.D. He returned to England in 1786-7, and took up his abode at Wem, in Shropshire. His son John was now rising into manhood, and had chosen the life of an artist in miniature.† William was a child of eight or nine. There is a very small likeness of him on ivory, painted in the New World, in the early morning of American freedom, and representing a beautiful little boy, with blue eyes, and long rich brown hair falling over his shoulders. This lets us see what William Hazlitt was at an age when most children have no formed expression; and even

* The Rev. G. P. Hinton. He had the best opportunity of knowing the truth, for his memoir of the Rev. W. Hazlitt was founded on information supplied to him by the family.

† Peggy Hazlitt was also a successful essayist in oils, and was a good flower-painter. If she had had instruction she would have made an artist.

then there are promising symptoms in the turn of the mouth and inarticulate eloquence of the eyes.

Wem was the earliest English home of which little William had any personal recollection. It seems to have been from there that the earliest specimen of his correspondence was directed to the Rev. W. Hazlitt, who was temporarily at a friend's house in London. The writer could not have been more than eight when he penned this precocious epistle:—

"12 of Nov. [1786?]

"MY DEAR PAPA,

"I shall never forget that we came to america. If we had not came to america, we should not have been away from one and other, though now it can not be helped. I think for my part that it would have been a great deal better if the white people had not found it out. Let the [others] have it to themselves, for it was made for them. I have got a little of my grammar; sometimes I get three pages and sometimes but one. I do not sifer any at all. Mamma Peggy and Jacky are all very well, and I am to—

"I still remain your most

"Affectionate Son,

"WILLIAM HAZLITT.

"The Rev. Mr. Hazlitt, London.

"To the care of Mr. David Lewes."

He was carefully educated under his father's roof at Wem, during his tender years, and he proved a docile pupil. The recollection of their visit to America

haunted him ever so long afterwards, as witness these words of his, written down five-and-thirty years later:—

"The taste of barberries, which have hung out in the snow during the severity of a North American winter, I have in my mouth still, after an interval of thirty years; for I have met with no other taste, in all that time, at all like it. It remains by itself, almost like the impression of a sixth sense."

John Hazlitt, the elder brother, had in the mean time studied under Sir Joshua Reynolds, and had finally established himself as a miniature painter in London. He lived in apartments at No. 288, High Holborn; and in 1788, being then only a youth of nineteen, he had the gratification of seeing two articles of his hung at the Royal Academy—a frame with four miniatures, and a portrait of A Lady. To him his brother William addressed from Wem a letter of news and congratulation:—

"Wem, Saturday morning,
"March —, 1788.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"I received your letter this morning. We were all glad to hear that you were well, and that you have so much business to do. We cannot be happy without being employed. I want you to tell me whether you go to the Academy or not, and what pictures you intend for the exhibition. Tell the exhibitioners to finish the exhibition soon, that you may soon come and see us. You must send your picture to us directly. You want to know what I do. I am a busybody, and do many

silly things; I drew eyes and noses till about a fortnight ago. I have drawn a little boy since, a man's face, and a little boy's front face, taken from a bust. Next Monday I shall begin to read 'Ovid's Metamorphoses' and 'Eutropius.' I shall like to know all the Latin and Greek I can. I want to learn how to measure the stars. I shall not, I suppose, paint the worse for knowing everything else. I begun to cypher a fortnight after Christmas, and shall go into the rule of three next week. I can teach a boy of sixteen already who was cyphering eight months before me; is he not a great dunce? I shall go through the whole cyphering book this summer, and then I am to learn Euclid. We go to school at nine every morning. Three boys begin with reading the Bible. Then I and two others show our exercises. We then read the 'Speaker.' Then we all set about our lessons, and those who are first ready say first. At eleven we write and cypher. In the afternoon we stand for places at spelling, and I am almost always first. We also read, and do a great deal of business besides. I can say no more about the boys here: some are so sulky they wont play; others are quarrelsome because they cannot learn, and are fit only for fighting like stupid dogs and cats. I can jump four yards at a running jump and two at a standing jump, I intend to try you at this when you come down. We are not all well, for poor Peggy has a great cold. You spelled Mr. Vaughan's name wrong, for you spelled it Vaughn. Write soon again. I wish I could see all those paintings that you see, and that Peggy had a good

prize. I don't want your old clothes. I shall go to dancing this month. This is all I can say.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WILLIAM HAZLITT."

Two years afterwards William Hazlitt paid a visit to Liverpool, where he was received at the house of a friend of the family—I imagine Mr. Railton—of whom more will be said hereafter:—

"Saturday, March —, 1790.

"DEAR FATHER,

"I now sit down to spend a little time in an employment, the productions of which I know will give you pleasure, though I know that every minute that I am employed in doing anything which will be advantageous to me, will give you pleasure. Happy, indeed unspeakably happy, are those people who, when at the point of death, are able to say, with a satisfaction which none but themselves can have any idea of—'I have done with this world, I shall now have no more of its temptations to struggle with, and praise be to God I have overcome them; now no more sorrow, now no more grief, but happiness for evermore!' But how unspeakably miserable is that man who, when his pleasures are going to end, when his lamp begins to grow dim, is compelled to say,—'Oh that I had done my duty to God and man! oh that I had been wise, and spent that time which was kindly given me by Providence, for a purpose quite contrary to that which I employed it to, as I should

have done; but it is now gone; I cannot recal time, nor can I undo all my wicked actions. I cannot seek that mercy which I have so often despised. I have no hope remaining. I must do as well as I can—but who can endure everlasting fire?' Thus does the wicked man breathe his last, and without being able to rely upon his good, with his last breath, in the anguish of his soul, says, 'Have mercy upon me a sinner, O God!'—After I had sealed up my last letter to you, George asked me if I were glad the Test Act was not repealed? I told him, No. Then he asked me why? and I told him because I thought that all the people who are inhabitants of a country, of whatsoever sect or denomination, should have the same rights with others.—But, says he, then they would try to get their religion established, or something to that purpose.—Well, what if it should be so?—He said that the Church religion was an old one.—Well, said I, Popery is older than that.—But then, said he, the Church religion is better than Popery.—And the Presbyterian is better than that, said I. I told him I thought so for certain reasons, not because I went to chapel. But at last, when I had overpowered him with my arguments, he said he wished he understood it as well as I did, for I was too high learned for him. I then went to the concert. But as I am now going with George to a Mrs. Cupham, I must defer the rest of my letter till another time. I have gotten to the 36th verse, 15th chapter.

"*Monday morning.*—I was very much pleased at the concert; but I think Meredith's singing was worth all

the rest. When we came out of the concert, which was about nine o'clock, we went to Mrs. Chilton's, at whose house we slept. It rained the next morning, but I was not much wet coming home. George was very much wet, and the colour of his coat was almost spoiled. On Wednesday Mr. Clegg did not come, as he was confined to his bed. On Wednesday evening Mr. Doloughpryeé came, to whom I was very attentive. I was sorry Mr. Clegg did not come on Saturday, but I hope he will come on Wednesday next. Saturday afternoon I and George, with Miss Avis, went to a Mrs. Bartton's, who appeared to be an unhospitable English prim 'lady,' if such she may be called. She asked us, as if she were afraid we should accept it, if we would stay to tea. And at the other English person's, for I am sure she belongs to no other country than to England, I got such a surfeit of their ceremonial unsociality, that I could not help wishing myself in America. I had rather people would tell one to go out of the house than ask one to stay, and, at the same time, be trembling all over, for fear one should take a slice of meat, or a dish of tea, with them. Such as these require an Horace or a Shakspeare to describe them. I have not yet learned the gamut perfectly, but I would have done it if I could. I spent a very agreeable day yesterday, as I read 160 pages of Priestley, and heard two good sermons; the best of which, in my opinion, was Mr. Lewin's, and the other Mr. Smith's. They both belong to Benn's Gardens Chapel. Mr. Nicholls called last night, who informed me that he sent the note by his boy, who left

it with the servant, and that when he went again, Mr. Yates had not received it; so that I have not yet received the books, which I am very sorry for. I forgot to tell you, Winfield and all the other part of the family are very well, and that Mrs. Tracey said, I said my French task very well last Saturday. I am now almost at the end of my letter, and shall therefore answer all questions in your letter, which I received this morning, which I have not already answered. And in the first place. I have not seen Mr. Kingston since. I am glad that you liked my letter to Joe, which I was afraid he had not received, as you said nothing about it. Does he intend to answer me? Miss Shepherd will go on Monday, I believe, and I shall go with her. I have not seen Mr. Yates since I wrote last. I do not converse in French; but I and Miss Tracey have a book, something like a vocabulary, where we get the meanings of words. Miss Tracey never does accompts, but I take an hour or two every other day. I will follow your Greek precept. Give my best love to mamma, and tell her I shall write to her next time, and hope she will write to me in answer to it. Give my respects to Mr. and Miss Cottons, and to every other inquirer, not forgetting Kynaston. I wish people made larger paper. I shall put this into the post-office to-night, Monday evening.

"I am your affectionate son,

"WILLIAM HAZLITT."

John Hazlitt was much pleased at his little brother's

letter, and wrote to his father, expressing his satisfaction. This produced the following:—

"Wem, March —, 1790.

"My dear William,

"Your brother said that your letter to him was very long, very clever, and very entertaining. On Wednesday evening, we had your letter, which was finished on the preceding Monday. The piety displayed in the first part of it was a great refreshment to me. Continue to cherish those thoughts which then occupied your mind; continue to be virtuous, and you will finally be that happy being whom you describe; and, to this purpose, you have nothing more to do than to pursue that conduct which will always yield you the highest pleasures even in this present life. But he who once gives way to any known vice, in the very instant hazards his total depravity and total ruin. You must, therefore, fixedly resolve never, through any possible motives, to do anything which you believe to be wrong. This will be only resolving never to be miserable; and this I rejoicingly expect will be the unwavering resolution of my William. Your conversation upon the Test Act did you honour. If we only think justly, we shall always easily foil all the advocates of tyranny. The inhospitable ladies whom you mention, were, perhaps, treated by you with too great severity. We know not how people may be circumstanced at a particular moment, whose disposition is generally friendly. They may, then, happen to pass under a cloud, which unfits them for social intercourse.

We must see them more than once or twice to be able to form a tolerable judgment of their characters. There are but few, like Mrs. Tracey, who can always appear what they really are. I do not say, however, that the English ladies whom you mentioned are not exactly as you described them. I only wish to caution you against forming too hasty a judgment of characters, who can seldom be known at a single interview. I wish you, if you can, to become master of the gamut while you are there. I am glad that you have made so great a progress in French, and that you are so very anxious to hear Mr. Clegg's lectures. It is a pity that you cannot have another month at the French, &c. But, as matters are, I hope you will be soon able to master that language. I am glad that you employed the last Sunday so well, and that the employment afforded you so much satisfaction. Nothing else can truly satisfy us, but the acquisition of knowledge and virtue. May these blessings be yours more and more every day! On Thursday morning we had a letter from Mr. Boatt, written at Boston, 24th of June, just five weeks before we received it. He was forty-six days on his passage from England, with agreeable company. They had sometimes very heavy weather, and so extremely cold, that the sails were frozen to the yards. The last winter was very extraordinary, and very unhealthy in America. Consequently, many persons died in Boston, and in other parts of the country. He says, concerning you, 'I read Billy's letter to Fanny, and she was delighted with it. She sends her love to him; but

Fanny has lost the recollection of her little playfellow. The letter does Billy much credit. He has uncommon powers of mind; and, if nothing happens to prevent his receiving a liberal education, he must make a great man.' This compliment, I know, will not make you proud, or conceited, but more diligent. He also desires his and Mrs. Boatt's affectionate regards to Billy. You see how careful I am to transmit to you all the news in my power. I must, now, give you some information and directions concerning your return home. Before you leave Liverpool you will not neglect to call upon all persons who have shown you any particular civilities. You will thank Mr. Nicholls for the trouble you have given him, and especially your masters for their attention to you, and Mr. Yates for his books, which you will be careful to return in the good order in which you received them. You will give my respects to Mr. Yates. I wish that he, amongst his friends, could procure for your brother engagements for about a score of pictures at Liverpool this summer, that we might have the pleasure of seeing him here. Your mother gives her love; and she unites with me in affectionate regards to Mrs. and all the Miss Traceys. I am, my dear William, your truly affectionate father,

"W. HAZLITT.

"Wednesday, March, 1790."

Here is another Liverpool letter, answering the last:—

"Monday, 18th March.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I this morning received your affectionate letter, and, at the same time, one from my brother and sister, who were very well when they wrote. On Wednesday I received a lexicon, which I was very glad of. I have, since that time, gotten to the 12th verse of the 14th chapter, which is 39 verses from the place I was in before. Mr. Clegg came last Wednesday, and employed the time he staid in showing the Miss Traceys how to find the latitude and longitude of any place, which I can now do upon the globes with ease. Whilst he was here I was as attentive as I could be. He came again on Saturday, and I came in a few minutes after he came. I drank tea at his house the Thursday before, when he asked me to prepare the map of Asia, which Miss Traceys were at that time getting. I answered that I had already gotten it. I said it to him on Saturday, with Miss Traceys, without missing a single word. He, when he had finished with us, bid me have the map of Africa ready by the next time he should come, which I have done. He also asked me to read a dialogue with him, which I did. I should think he intends to teach me geography while I stay. On Thursday he took me and George, with his two brothers, to the glass-house, and then we went to the new fort. On Friday I went to the play with Mr. Corbett, at whose house I dined and drank tea. The play was 'Love in many Masks,' and the farce, 'No Song, no Supper.' It was very entertaining, and was performed by some of

the best players in London, as for instance, Kemble, Suett, Dignum, the famous singer, Mrs. Williams, Miss Hagley, Miss Romanzini, and others. Suett, who acted in the character of 'Ned Blunt,' was enough to make any one laugh, though he stood still; and Kemble acted admirably as an officer. Mr. Dignum sang beautifully, and Miss Hagley acted the country-girl with much exactness. Mr. Corbett says he will take us to another play before we go. So much for last week. I have been writing an hour now. Yesterday I went to Meeting by myself in the morning, where we had a very good discourse on the 10th of the 2nd chapter of Thess. 2nd—'With all deceiveableness of unrighteousness.' From this he drew several conclusions of the false pretences which are made by sin to her followers to happiness; how people are drawn away, by imperceptible degrees, from one degree of sin to another, and so on to greater. I sent a note to Mr. Yates this morning, requesting him to send me a dictionary and 'Horace.' Was it right to express myself in this manner? —'Mr. Hazlitt sends his compliments to Mr. Yates, and would be much obliged to him if he would send him a dictionary and an "Horace."'

"'P. S. Papa desired me to remember him to you.'

"On Sunday, after I had come from Meeting, I went, but not willingly, to Mrs. Sydebotham's to dinner. In the afternoon we went to church, for the first time I ever was in one, and I do not care if I should never go into one again. The clergyman, after he had gabbled

over half a dozen prayers, began his sermon, the text of which was as follows: — Zachariah, 3rd chapter, 2nd verse, latter part—'Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' If a person had come in five minutes after he began, he would have thought that he had taken his text out of Joshua. In short, his sermon had neither head nor tail. I was sorry that so much time should be thrown away upon nonsense. I often wished I was hearing Mr. Yates; but I shall see I do not go to church again in a hurry. I have been very busy to day; I got up at seven and wrote a note for Mr. Yates; and called on Mr. Nicholls with it, who was at breakfast. I then went to the post-office, and there I stayed a good while waiting for my letter, but as they told me the letters were gone to Richmond, I came home to my breakfast. After breakfast I went with George, to buy some paper, down to Mr. Bird; when I came home I sat down to my French, but as Mrs. Tracey wanted some riband, I went to Mr. Bird's for some; but, as you may suppose, I was not a long time going there. I had almost forgotten to tell you that I wrote to Joseph Swanwick last week. I have everything ready for Mr. Doloughpryée, who comes this evening. I have also made myself perfect in the map of Africa. As I have now given you all the news I can, I shall lay by for the present, and to-morrow, for my observations and reflections. Tell Kynaston I have done the first sum, and understand it quite well. I cannot play any tune on the harpsichord but 'God save the King.'—Farewell for the present.

"I shall have satis pecuniæ, dum tu habeas opportunitatem, mittendi aliquam partem mihi.*

"Tuesday morning.

"I have this morning gotten my French for to-morrow, and thirteen verses of the 'Testament;' I have also written out the contractions, and can tell any of them. I said my lessons very well last night; I had only one word wrong in my fable, and not any one in my two verbs. I am to go to the concert to-night. I have written two verbs, and translated my French task. How ineffectual are all pleasures, except those which arise from a knowledge of having done, as far as one knew, that which was right, to make their possessors happy. The people who possess them, at night, lie down upon their beds, and after having spent a wearisome night, rise up in the morning to pursue the same 'pleasures.' or, more properly, vain shadows of pleasure, which, like Jacks with lanthorns, as they are called, under a fair outside, at last bring those people who are so foolish as to confide in them into destruction, which they cannot then escape. *How* different from them is a man who *wisely* '*in a time of peace, lays up arms, and such like necessaries in case of a war.*' Mrs. Tracey desires me to give her respects."

* I apprehend that the *opportunitates* of my great-grandfather were neither large nor frequent at this or any other period of his honest, unambitious career. To what precise extent he was enabled to supply his son William with funds, during the absences of the latter from home, I have no means of knowing; but I should surmise that frugality was among his virtues, whether he would or no.

CHAPTER II.

1791-1795.

As an author—Letter to the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* (1791)—Personal reminiscences—Correspondence with his father.

FROM 1791 it is that I must date my grandfather's entrance into the field as a political champion. He was now thirteen, and his love of truth and liberty was outraged by the proceedings which had then recently taken place at Birmingham against Dr. Priestley, his father's friend and correspondent, and the idol of Coleridge and Lamb. He composed a letter expressive of his views, and sent it to the editor of the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, who inserted it:—

"MR. WOOD,

"'Tis really surprising that men—men, too, that aspire to the character of Christians—should seem to take such pleasure in endeavouring to load with infamy one of the best, one of the wisest, and one of the greatest of men.

"One of your late correspondents, under the signature of ΟΥΔΕΙΣ, seems desirous of having Dr. Priestley in

chains, and indeed would not perhaps (from the gentleman's seemingly charitable disposition) be greatly averse to seeing him in the flames also.. This is the Christian! This the mild spirit its great Master taught. Ah! Christianity, how art thou debased! How am I grieved to see that universal benevolence, that love to all mankind, that love even to our enemies, and that compassion for the failings of our fellow-men that thou art contracted to promote, contracted and shrunk up within the narrow limits that prejudice and bigotry mark out. But to return;—supposing the gentleman's end to be intentionally good, supposing him indeed to desire all this, in order to extirpate the Doctor's supposedly impious and erroneous doctrines, and promote the cause of truth; yet the means he would use are certainly wrong. For may I be allowed to remind him of this (which prejudice has hitherto apparently prevented him from seeing), that violence and force can never promote the cause of truth, but reason and argument or love, and whenever these fail, all other means are vain and ineffectual. And as the Doctor himself has said, in his letter to the inhabitants of Birmingham, 'that if they destroyed him, ten others would arise, as able or abler than himself, and stand forth immediately to defend his principles; and that were these destroyed, an hundred would appear; for the God of truth will not suffer his cause to lie defenceless.'

"This letter of the Doctor's also, though it throughout breathes the pure and genuine spirit of Christianity, is, by another of your correspondents, charged with

sedition and heresy; but, indeed, if such sentiments as those which it contains be sedition and heresy, sedition and heresy would be an honour; for all their sedition is that fortitude that becomes the dignity of man and the character of Christian; and their heresy, Christianity. The whole letter, indeed, far from being seditious, is peaceable and charitable; and far from being heretical, that is, in the usual acceptance of the word, furnishing proofs of that resignation so worthy of himself. And to be sensible of this, 'tis only necessary, that any one laying aside prejudice read the letter itself with candour. What, or who, then, is free from the calumniating pen of malice, malice concealed, perhaps, under the specious disguise of religion and a love of truth?

"Religious persecution is the bane of all religion; and the friends of persecution are the worst enemies religion has; and of all persecutions, that of calumny is the most intolerable. Any other kind of persecution can affect our outward circumstances only, our properties, our lives; but this may affect our characters for ever. And this great man has not only had his goods spoiled, his habitation burned, and his life endangered, but is also calumniated, aspersed with the most malicious reflections, and charged with everything bad, for which a misrepresentation of the truth and prejudice can give the least pretence. And why all this? To the shame of some one, let it be replied, merely on account of particular speculative opinions, and not anything scandalous, shameful, or criminal in his moral character. 'Where I see,' says the great and admirable Robinson,

'a spirit of intolerance, I think I see the great Devil.' And 'tis certainly the worst of devils. And here I shall conclude, staying only to remind your anti-Priestlian correspondents, that when they presume to attack the character of Dr. Priestley, they do not so much resemble the wren pecking at the eagle, as the owl, attempting by the flap of her wings, to hurl Mount Etna into the ocean; and that while Dr. Priestley's name 'shall flourish in immortal youth,' and his memory be respected and revered by posterity, prejudice no longer blinding the understandings of men, theirs will be forgotten in obscurity, or only remembered as the friends of bigotry and persecution, the most odious of all characters.

"ΕΛΙΑΣΟΝ."

His brother John painted a miniature portrait of him as he appeared at this time—a beautiful youth, with the hair flowing over his shoulders, and his exquisitely-formed hands displayed to advantage. It was the second time he had sat to an artist. While he was with his father in America, a portrait of him was taken, as I have already stated, by somebody whose name I have not been able to recover (1783 was too early for John), representing the future philosopher and critic, *anno ætatis* five. It is a miniature of the smallest dimensions, adapted for a brooch. The features are infantile; yet is the man in the child to my apprehending.

At the age of fifteen my grandfather entered the

Unitarian College, Hackney, where he was under the immediate care and control of a Mr. Corrie. A little before this he had begun to turn his attention to political and metaphysical questions. But at this early stage I must let him tell his own story in his own words:—

"When I was about fourteen (as long ago as the year 1792), in consequence of a dispute one day, after coming out of Meeting, between my father and an old lady of the congregation, respecting the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts and the limits of religious toleration, I set about forming in my head (the first time I ever attempted to think) the following system of political rights and general jurisprudence." With this explanation he introduces his 'Project for a New Theory of Civil and Criminal Legislation,' written in maturer years.

"It was this circumstance," he goes on to tell us, "that decided the fate of my future life; or rather, I would say, it was from an original bias or craving to be satisfied of the reason of things, that I seized hold of this accidental opportunity to indulge in its uneasy and unconscious determination."

He was at this time studying for the Church under Mr. Corrie's more especial superintendence. Mr. Corrie found his pupil rather backward in many of the ordinary points of learning, and, in general, of a dry, intractable understanding. My grandfather at last disclosed to Mr. Corrie the fact that, although he appeared somewhat deficient in other matters, he thought he could do a little in a different way; and he hinted at what he was

about—this system of his. Mr. Corrie very kindly invited him to put his ideas down on paper, which he did.

My grandfather says further:—

"Mr. Corrie, my old tutor at Hackney, may still have the rough draught of this speculation, which I gave him with tears in my eyes, and which he good-naturedly accepted in lieu of the customary *themes*, and as a proof that I was no idler; but that my inability to produce a line on the ordinary school topics arose from my being involved in more difficult and abstruse matters. He must smile at the so oft-repeated charge against me of florid flippancy and tinsel.

"If from those briars I have since plucked roses, what labour has it not cost me? The Test and Corporation Acts were repealed the other day.

"How would my father have rejoiced if this had happened in his time, and in concert with his old friends, Dr. Price, Dr. Priestley, and others! . . . . .

"I began with trying to define what a *right* meant; and this I settled with myself was not simply that which is good or useful in itself, but that which is thought so by the individual, and which has the sanction of his will as such. . . . . The next question I asked myself was, what is law, and the real and necessary ground of civil government? The answer to this is found in the former statement. *Law* is something to abridge, or more properly speaking, to ascertain, the bounds of the original right, and to coerce the will of individuals in the community. . . . ."

I cannot afford room for further details respecting this piece of literary history, but the whole is printed among the works, and it certainly deserves respectful attention as Mr. Hazlitt's earliest essay upon any subject. It preceded, by about five years, the commencement of his second labour, which was still more recondite and ambitious. I mean, of course, that he had written it out in a rough draught which he gave to his tutor; the essay, as it appears among the 'Literary Remains,' was not actually written till 1828.

The three letters which I subjoin were written during his stay as Hackney, and partially bear upon this question:—

"London, October 6th, 1793.

"DEAR FATHER,

"I received your very kind letter yesterday morning. With respect to my past behaviour, I have often said, and I now assure you, that it did not proceed from any real disaffection, but merely from the nervous disorder to which, you well know, I was so much subject. This was really the case, however improbable it may appear. Nothing particular occurred from the time I wrote last, till the Saturday following. On the Wednesday before, Corrie had given me a theme. As it was not a subject suited to my genius, and from other causes, I had not written anything on it; so that I was not pleased to hear his bell on Saturday morning, which was the time for showing our themes. When I came to him, he asked me whether I had prepared my theme. I told him I had not. You should have a very good

reason indeed, sir, says he, for neglecting it. Why really, sir, says I, I could not write it. Did you never write anything, then, says he? Yes, sir, I said; I have written some things. Very well, then, go along and write your theme immediately, said he. I accordingly went away, but did not make much progress in my theme an hour after, when his bell rang for another lecture. My eyes were much swollen, and I assumed as sullen a countenance as I could, intimating that he had not treated me well. After the lecture, as I was going away, he called me back, and asked me very mildly if I had never written anything. I answered, I had written several things. On which he desired me to let him see one of my compositions, if I had no objection. I immediately took him my 'Essay on Laws,' and gave it to him. When he had read it, he asked me a few questions on the subject, which I answered very satisfactorily, I believe. Well, sir, says he, I wish you'd write some more such things as this. Why, sir, said I, I intended to write several things which I have planned, but that I could not write any of them in a week, or two or three weeks. What did you intend to write? says he. Among other things, I told him that I intended to enlarge and improve the essay he had been reading. Ay, says he, I wish you would. Well, I will do it then, sir, said I. Do so, said he; take your own time now; I shall not ask you for it; only write it as soon as you can, for I shall often be thinking of it, and very desirous of it. This he repeated once or twice. On this I wished him a good morning, and came away, very well pleased with

the reception I had met. The Greek class which I have been in this week consists of two old students, J. Mason, and myself. I think that I translate more correctly, and much better, than any of them. The other day Mason was laughing at me while I was translating a passage, on account of my way of speaking. Says Corrie to him, Mr. Mason, you should be sure you can translate yours as well as Mr. Hazlitt does his, before you laugh at your neighbours.

"I believe I am liked very well by the students, in general. I am pretty intimate with one of them, whose name is Tonson. F. Swanwick has been hitherto in a different class; but on applying to Corrie, he has been put into the same class with me. Farewell!

"I am your affectionate son,
"W. HAZLITT."

"Sunday evening.

"DEAR FATHER,

"I received your letter safely on Monday. On the preceding Saturday I finished the introduction to my essay on the 'Political State of Man,' and showed it to Corrie. He seemed very well pleased with it, and desired me to proceed with my essay as quickly as I could. After a few definitions, I give the following sketch of my plan:—

"'In treating on the political state of man, I shall, first, endeavour to represent his natural political relations, and to deduce from these his natural political duties and his natural political rights; and, secondly, to

represent his artificial political relations, and to deduce from these his artificial political duties, and his artificial political rights.' This I think an excellent plan. I wish I could execute it to my own satisfaction. I hope, however, to do it tolerably by Christmas. I have already got the greatest part of the ideas necessary, though in a crude and undigested state; so that my principal business will be to correct and arrange them. But this will be a terrible labour, and I shall rejoice most heartily when I have finished it.

"Corrie seemed much pleased with some of my translations this week.

"I passed the Ass's Bridge very safely and very solitarily on Friday. I like Domine (that is the name by which Dr. Rees goes here) and his lectures very much.

"I am your affectionate son,
"WILLIAM HAZLITT."

"DEAR FATHER,

"I was sorry to hear from your two last letters that you wish me to discontinue my essay, as I am very desirous of finishing it, and as I think it necessary to do so. For I have already completed the two first propositions, and the third I have planned, and shall be able to finish in a very short time: the fourth proposition, which will be the last, will consist only of a few lines. The first section you know I have done for some time; and the first and fourth propositions are exactly similar to the first, second, and fourth of the second section, so

that I have little else to do than to alter a few words. The third will consist principally of observations on government, laws, &c., most of which will be the same with what I have written before in my 'Essay on Laws.' My chief reason for wishing to continue my observations is, that by having a particular system of politics, I shall be better able to judge of the truth or falsehood of any principle which I hear or read, and of the justice or the contrary of any political transactions. Moreover, by comparing my own system with those of others, and with particular facts, I shall have it in my power to correct and improve it continually. But I can have neither of these advantages unless I have some standard by which to judge of, and of which to judge by, any ideas or proceedings which I may meet with. Besides, so far is my studying this subject from making me gloomy or low-spirited, that I am never so perfectly easy as when I am or have been studying it.

With respect to themes, I really think them rather disserviceable than otherwise. I shall not be able to make a good oration from my essay. It is too abstruse and exact for that purpose. I shall endeavour to write one on Providence, which will, I think, be a very good subject. I shall certainly make it my study to acquire as much politeness as I can. However, this is not the best place possible for acquiring it. I do not at all say that the fellows who are here do not know how to behave extremely well, but the behaviour which suits a set of young fellows, or boys, does not suit any other society. This circumstance, however, is of very little

consequence, as little else is necessary to politeness than ease and a desire of pleasing.

"I forget to tell you that Corrie has not returned me the first part of my essay.

"I am, dear father,

"Your affectionate son,

"WILLIAM HAZLITT."

I shall leave Mr. Hazlitt to speak for himself as much as possible henceforth. He says:—

"When I was quite a boy, my father used to take me to the Montpelier tea-gardens at Walworth.* Do I go there now? No; the place is deserted, and its borders and its beds o'erturned. I unlock the casket of memory, and draw back the warders of the brain; and there this scene of my infant wanderings still lives unfaded, or with fresher dyes. I see the beds of larkspur with purple eyes; tall hollyhocks, red and yellow; the broad sun-flowers, caked in gold, with bees buzzing round them; wildernesses of pinks and hot-glowing peonies; poppies run to seed; the sugared lily and faint mignionette, all ranged in order, and as thick as they can grow; the box-tree borders; the gravel walks; the painted alcove, the confectionery, the clotted cream—I think I see them now.

"When I was a boy I lived within sight of a range of

* Here we seem to have just a glimpse of an early experience of London life. This passage has led me to conjecture that at this time the Rev. W. Hazlitt was residing provisionally in or near Walworth; but I have no more distinct evidence of such a fact.

lofty hills,* whose blue tops blending with the setting sun had often tempted my longing eyes and wandering feet. At last I put my project in execution, and on a nearer approach, instead of glimmering air woven into fantastic shapes, found them huge lumpish heaps of discoloured earth.

"In the library of the family where we were brought up [he means in his father's library] stood the *Fratres Poloni*;† and we can never forget or describe the feeling with which not only their appearance, but the names of the authors on the outside inspired us. Pripcovius, we remember, was one of the easiest to pronounce. The gravity of the contents seemed in proportion to the weight of the volumes; the importance of the subjects increased with our ignorance of them. The trivialness of the remarks, if ever we looked into them, the repetitions, the monotony, only gave a greater solemnity to the whole, as the slowness and minuteness of the evidence adds to the impressiveness of a judicial proceeding. We knew that the authors had devoted their whole lives to the production of these works, carefully abstaining from the introduction of anything amusing or lively or interesting. In the folio volumes there was not one sally of wit, one striking reflection. Such was the notion we then had of this learned lumber; yet we would rather have this feeling again for one half-hour

* The Wrekin.

† Polonorum Fratrum Bibliotheca quos Unitarios vocant, viz., Faustus Socinus, Jo. Crellius, Jo. Slichtingius, et J. L. Wolzogenius, Opera, quæ omnia simul juncta totius Novi Testamenti explicationem complectuntur. 1656, 5 vols. folio.

than be possessed of all the acuteness of Bayle or the wit of Voltaire!

"It was my misfortune perhaps to be bred up among dissenters, who look with too jaundiced an eye at others, and set too high a value on their own peculiar pretensions. From being proscribed themselves, they learn to proscribe others; and come in the end to reduce all integrity of principle and soundness of opinion within the pale of their own little communion. Those who were out of it, and did not belong to the class of *Rational Dissenters*, I was led erroneously to look upon as hardly deserving the name of rational beings.

"For many years of my life I did nothing but think. I had nothing else to do but solve some knotty point, or dip in some abstruse author, or look at the sky, or wander by the pebbled sea-side—

> To see the children sporting on the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

I cared for nothing, I wanted nothing. I took my time to consider whatever occurred to me, and was in no hurry to give a sophistical answer to a question—there was no printer's devil waiting for me. I used to write a page or two perhaps in half a year, and remember laughing heartily at the celebrated experimentalist, Nicholson, who told me that in twenty years he had written as much as would make three hundred octavo volumes. If I was not a great author, I could read with ever fresh delight, 'never ending, still beginning,' and had no occasion to write a criticism when I had

done. If I could not paint like Claude, I could admire 'the witchery of the soft blue sky,' as I walked out, and was satisfied with the pleasure it gave me. . . . I had no relations to the state, no duty to perform, no ties to bind me to others; I had neither friend nor mistress, wife or child. I lived in a world of contemplation, and not of action. This sort of dreaming existence is the best.

"I tried to read some of the dialogues in the translation of Plato [by Taylor], but I confess I could make nothing of it; the logic was so different from ours!

"I never could make much of Cicero, except his two treatises on Friendship and Old Age, which are most amiable gossiping. I see that Canning borrowed his tautology from Cicero, who runs on with such expressions as, 'I will *bear*, I will *suffer*, I will *endure*.' This is bad enough in the original; it is inexcusable in the copy. Cicero's style, however, answered to the elegance of his finely-turned features; and in his long, graceful neck you may trace his winding and involuted periods."

In *them* Mr. Hazlitt said that he did not believe "more than he could help."

He mentions being present, when he was sixteen, at "a large party composed of men, women, and children, in which two persons of remarkable candour and ingenuity were labouring (as hard as if they had been paid for it) to prove that all prayer was a mode of dictating to the Almighty, and an arrogant assumption of superiority. A gentleman present said, with great simplicity and *naïveté*, that there was one prayer which

did not strike him as coming exactly under this description; and being asked what that was, made answer, 'The Samaritan's—Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.' This appeal by no means settled the sceptical dogmatism of the two disputants, and soon after the proposer of the objection went away; at which one of them observed, with great marks of satisfaction and triumph—'I am afraid we have shocked that gentleman's prejudices.' This did not appear to me at that time quite the thing, and this happened in the year 1794."

About this time he wandered about in many places alone; and oh! yet not alone. He visited Burleigh, and saw its pictures for the first time—he went there twice afterwards. He also undertook (it must have been about now) a pilgrimage to Wisbeach, in Cambridgeshire, "to see the town where his mother was born, and the poor farmhouse where she was brought up, and the gate, where she told him that she used to stand, when a child of ten years old, and look at the setting sun!" These are his own very words, put down five-and-twenty years afterwards; and seventy years afterwards, I, transcribing them, find my eyes filling with tears, at recollections so affecting—so nearly being personal!

Till his dying day, he retained in his heart and in his mind a lifelike and fond remembrance of the happy days at Wem.

"If I see a row of cabbage-plants, or of peas or beans coming up, I immediately think of those I used so carefully to water of an evening at Wem, when

my day's tasks were done, and of the pain with which I saw them droop and hang down their leaves in the morning's sun. Again, I never see a child's kite in the air, but it seems to pull at my heart. It is to me 'a thing of life.' I feel the twinge at my elbow, the flutter and palpitation with which I used to let go the string of my own, as it rose in the air and towered among the clouds."

CHAPTER III.

1795–1798.

His first acquaintance with poets (January, 1798)—Samuel Taylor Coleridge at Wem — William Hazlitt's visit to Coleridge and Wordsworth—Chiefly autobiographical.

BUT my grandfather's mind was to receive, a few years later, an extraordinary stimulus from a quarter where he could as little as possible have been expecting it. When he was in his twentieth year, and still at Wem under the paternal eye, there came hither somebody of more mark and likelihood, to pay his respects to the Rev. W. Hazlitt, than the young thinker had ever chanced to come across in all his rambles. In 1798, and in the month of January, Samuel Taylor Coleridge came to visit my great-grandfather over from Shrewsbury, where he was officiating for Mr. Rowe, the Unitarian minister there.

Of his first introduction to Coleridge, in January, 1798, he has left the following account:—*

* Published originally in the *Examiner* newspaper for January 12, 1817; in the same shape it was included among the *Political Essays*, 1819. It was afterwards amplified, and printed in the first volume of the *Liberal* (1823). It has been published two or three times since, and here it is again.

"In the year 1798 Mr. Coleridge came to Shrewsbury to succeed Mr. Rowe in the spiritual charge of a Unitarian congregation there. He did not come till late on the Saturday afternoon before he was to preach; and Mr. Rowe, who himself went down to the coach in a state of anxiety and expectation to look for the arrival of his successor, could find no one at all answering the description but a round-faced man, in a short black coat (like a shooting-jacket) which hardly seemed to have been made for him, but who seemed to be talking at a great rate to his fellow-passengers. Mr. Rowe had scarce returned to give an account of his disappointment when the round-faced man in black entered, and dissipated all doubts on the subject by beginning to talk. He did not cease while he stayed; nor has he since, that I know of. He held the good town of Shrewsbury in delightful suspense for three weeks that he remained there, 'fluttering the *proud Salopians* like an eagle in a dove-cote;' and the Welsh mountains, that skirt the horizon with their tempestuous confusion, agree to have heard no such mystic sounds since the days of

High-born Hoel's harp or soft Llewelyn's lay!

As we passed along between Wem and Shrewsbury, and I eyed their blue tops seen through the wintry branches, or the red rustling leaves of the sturdy oak trees by the roadside, a sound was in my ears as of a Siren's song; I was stunned, startled with it, as from deep sleep; but

I had no notion then that I should ever be able to express my admiration to others in motley imagery or quaint allusion, till the light of his genius shone into my soul, like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road. I was at that time dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the wayside, crushed, bleeding, lifeless; but now, bursting from the deadly bands that bound them,

With Styx nine times round them,

my ideas float on winged words, and as they expand their plumes, catch the golden light of other years. . . .

"My father lived [at Wem] ten miles from Shrewsbury, and was in the habit of exchanging visits with Mr. Rowe, and with Mr. Jenkins of Whitchurch (nine miles farther on), according to the custom of dissenting ministers in each other's neighbourhood. A line of communication is thus established, by which the flame of civil and religious liberty is kept alive, and nourishes its smouldering fire unquenchable, like the fires in the Agamemnon of Æschylus, placed at different stations, that waited for ten long years to announce with their blazing pyramids the destruction of Troy. Coleridge had agreed to come over and see my father, according to the courtesy of the country; as Mr. Rowe's probable successor; but, in the mean time, I had gone to hear him preach the Sunday after his arrival. A poet and a philosopher getting up into a Unitarian pulpit to preach the gospel, was a romance in these degenerate

days, a sort of revival of the primitive spirit of Christianity, which was not to be resisted.

"It was in January, 1798, that I rose one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud, to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one, in the winter of the year 1798.—*Il y a des impressions que ni le tems ni les circonstances peuvent effacer. Dusse-je vivre des siècles entiers, le doux tems de ma jeunesse ne peut renaitre pour moi, ni s'effacer jamais dans ma mémoire.* When I got there the organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, 'And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE.' As he gave out this text, his voice 'rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,' and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. The idea of St. John came into my mind, 'of one crying in the wilderness, who had his loins girt about, and whose food was locusts and wild honey.' The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war; upon church and state—not their alliance, but their separation—on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. He talked

of those who had 'inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore.' He made a poetical and pastoral excursion,—and to show the fatal effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock, 'as though he should never be old,' and the same poor country lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an alehouse, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood.

Such were the notes our once-loved poet sung.

And for myself I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together, Truth and Genius had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of Religion. This was even beyond my hopes. I returned home well satisfied. The sun that was still labouring pale and wan through the sky, obscured by thick mists, seemed an emblem of the *good cause;* and the cold dank drops of dew, that hung half melted on the beard of the thistle, had something genial and refreshing in them; for there was a spirit of hope and youth in all nature, that turned everything into good. The face of nature had not then the brand of JUS DIVINUM on it:

Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.

"On the Tuesday following the half-inspired speaker came. I was called down into the room where he was, and went half hoping, half afraid. He received me very graciously, and I listened for a long time without uttering a word. I did not suffer in his opinion by my silence. 'For those two hours,' he afterwards was pleased to say, 'he was conversing with William Hazlitt's forehead!' His appearance was different from what I had anticipated from seeing him before. At a distance, and in the dim light of the chapel, there was to me a strange wildness in his aspect, a dusky obscurity, and I thought him pitted with the small-pox. His complexion was at that time clear, and even bright—

As are the children of yon azure sheen.

His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them, like a sea with darkened lustre. 'A certain tender bloom his face o'erspread,' a purple tinge as we see it in the pale thoughtful complexions of the Spanish portrait-painters, Murillo and Velasquez. His mouth was gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent; his chin good-humoured and round; but his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing—like what he has done. It might seem that the genius of his face as from a height surveyed and projected him (with sufficient capacity and huge aspiration) into the world unknown of thought and imagination, with nothing to support or guide his

veering purpose—as if Columbus had launched his adventurous course for the New World in a scallop, without oars or compass. So at least I comment on it after the event. Coleridge, in his person, was rather above the common size, inclining to the corpulent, or like Lord Hamlet, 'somewhat fat and pursy.' His hair (now, alas! grey) was then black and glossy as the raven's, and fell in smooth masses over his forehead. This long pendulous hair is peculiar to enthusiasts, to those whose minds tend heavenward; and is traditionally inseparable (though of a different colour) from the pictures of Christ. It ought to belong, as a character, to all who preach *Christ crucified,* and Coleridge was at that time one of those!

"It was curious to observe the contrast between him and my father, who was a veteran in the cause, and then declining into the vale of years. He had been a poor Irish lad, carefully brought up by his parents, and sent to the University of Glasgow (where he studied under Adam Smith) to prepare him for his future destination.* It was his mother's proudest wish to see her son a dissenting minister. So, if we look back to past generations (as far as eye can reach), we see the same hopes, fears, wishes, followed by the same disappointments, throbbing in the human heart; and so we may see them (if we look forward) rising up for ever, and disappearing, like vapourish bubbles, in the human breast! After being tossed about from congregation to

* See more of this *suprâ*.—ED.

congregation in the heats of the Unitarian controversy, and squabbles about the American war, he had been relegated to an obscure village, where he was to spend the last thirty years of his life, far from the only converse that he loved, the talk about disputed texts of Scripture, and the cause of civil and religious liberty. Here he passed his days, repining, but resigned, in the study of the Bible, and the perusal of the commentators,—huge folios, not easily got through, one of which would outlast a winter! Why did he pore on these from morn to night (with the exception of a walk in the fields or a turn in the garden to gather broccoli-plants or kidney-beans of his own rearing, with no small degree of pride and pleasure)?—Here were 'no figures nor no fantasies,'—neither poetry nor philosophy —nothing to dazzle, nothing to excite modern curiosity; but to his lack-lustre eyes there appeared, within the pages of the ponderous, unwieldy, neglected tomes, the sacred name of JEHOVAH in Hebrew capitals. Pressed down by the weight of the style, worn to the last fading thinness of the understanding, there were glimpses, glimmering notions of the patriarchal wanderings, with palm trees hovering in the horizon, and processions of camels at the distance of three thousand years; there was Moses with the Burning Bush, the number of the Twelve Tribes, types, shadows, glosses on the law and the prophets; there were discussions (dull enough) on the age of Methuselah, a mighty speculation! there were outlines, rude guesses at the shape of Noah's Ark

and of the riches of Solomon's Temple; questions as to the date of the creation, predictions of the end of all things; the great lapses of time, the strange mutations of the globe were unfolded with the voluminous leaf, as it turned over; and though the soul might slumber with an hieroglyphic veil of inscrutable mysteries drawn over it, yet it was in a slumber ill-exchanged for all the sharpened realities of sense, wit, fancy, or reason. My father's life was comparatively a dream; but it was a dream of infinity and eternity, of death, the resurrection, and a judgment to come!

"No two individuals were ever more unlike than were the host and his guest. A poet was to my father a sort of nondescript; yet whatever added grace to the Unitarian cause was to him welcome. He could hardly have been more surprised or pleased if our visitor had worn wings. Indeed, his thoughts had wings; and as the silken sounds rustled round our little wainscoted parlour, my father threw back his spectacles over his forehead, his white hairs mixing with its sanguine hue, and a smile of delight beamed across his rugged cordial face, to think that Truth had found a new ally in Fancy!* Besides, Coleridge seemed to take considerable notice of me, and that of itself was enough. He

* My father was one of those who mistook his talent after all. He used to be very much dissatisfied that I preferred his Letters to his Sermons. The last were forced and dry; the first came naturally from him. For ease, half-plays on words, and a supine, monkish, indolent pleasantry, I have never seen them equalled.

talked very familiarly, but agreeably, and glanced over a variety of subjects. At dinner-time he grew more animated, and dilated in a very edifying manner on Mary Wolstonecraft and Mackintosh. The last, he said, he considered (on my father's speaking of his 'Vindiciæ Gallicæ' as a capital performance) as a clever scholastic man—a master of the topics,—or as the ready warehouseman of letters, who knew exactly where to lay his hand on what he wanted, though the goods were not his own. He thought him no match for Burke, either in style or matter. Burke was a metaphysician, Mackintosh a mere logician. Burke was an orator (almost a poet) who reasoned in figures, because he had an eye for nature: Mackintosh, on the other hand, was a rhetorician, who had only an eye to common-places. On this I ventured to say that I had always entertained a great opinion of Burke, and that (as far as I could find) the speaking of him with contempt might be made the test of a vulgar democratical mind. This was the first observation I ever made to Coleridge, and he said it was a very just and striking one. I remember the leg of Welsh mutton and the turnips on the table that day had the finest flavour imaginable. Coleridge added that Mackintosh and Tom Wedgwood (of whom, however, he spoke highly) had expressed a very indifferent opinion of his friend Mr. Wordsworth, on which he remarked to them—'He strides on so far before you, that he dwindles in the distance!' Godwin had once boasted to him of having carried on an argu-

ment with Mackintosh for three hours with dubious success. Coleridge told him—'If there had been a man of genius in the room, he would have settled the question in five minutes.' He asked me if I had ever seen Mary Wolstonecraft, and I said I had once for a few moments, and that she seemed to me to turn off Godwin's objections to something she advanced with quite a playful, easy air. He replied, that 'this was only one instance of the ascendancy which people of imagination exercised over those of mere intellect.' He did not rate Godwin very high * (this was caprice or prejudice, real or affected), but he had a great idea of Mrs. Wolstonecraft's powers of conversation; none at all of her talent for book-making. We talked a little about Holcroft. He had been asked if he was not much struck *with* him; and he said, he thought himself in more danger of being struck *by* him. I complained that he would not let me get on at all, for he required a definition of even the commonest word, exclaiming, 'What do you mean by a *sensation*, sir? What do you mean by an *idea?*" This, Coleridge said, was barricading the road to truth—it was setting up a turnpike-gate at every step we took. I forget a great number of things, many more than I remember; but the day passed off pleasantly, and the next morning

* He complained in particular of the presumption of his attempting to establish the future immortality of man, "without" (as he said) "knowing what Death was or what Life was"—and the tone in which he pronounced these two words seemed to convey a complete image of both.

Mr. Coleridge was to return to Shrewsbury. When I came down to breakfast, I found that he had just received a letter from his friend T. Wedgwood,* making him an offer of 150*l.* a-year if he chose to waive his present pursuit, and devote himself entirely to the study of poetry and philosophy. Coleridge seemed to make up his mind to close with this proposal in the act of tying on one of his shoes. It threw an additional damp on his departure. It took the wayward enthusiast quite from us to cast him into Deva's winding vales, or by the shores of old romance. Instead of living at ten miles' distance, of being the pastor of a dissenting congregation at Shrewsbury, he was henceforth to inhabit the Hill of Parnassus, to be a Shepherd on the Delectable Mountains. Alas! I knew not the way thither, and felt very little gratitude for Mr. Wedgwood's bounty. I was presently relieved from this dilemma; for Mr. Coleridge, asking for a pen and ink, and going to a table to write something on a bit of card, advanced towards me with undulating step, and giving me the precious document, said that that was his address, *Mr. Coleridge, Nether-Stowey, Somersetshire;* and that he should be glad to see me there in a few weeks' time, and, if I chose, would come half-way to meet me. I was not less surprised than the shepherd-boy (this simile is to be found in Cassandra) when he sees a thunder-bolt fall close at his feet. I stammered out my acknowledgments and acceptance of this offer (I thought Mr. Wedgwood's annuity a trifle to it) as

* Thomas Wedgwood, Esq., brother of the Potter.

well as I could; and this mighty business being settled, the poet-preacher took leave, and I accompanied him six miles on the road. It was a fine morning in the middle of winter, and he talked the whole way. The scholar in Chaucer is described as going

—— Sounding on his way.

So Coleridge went on his."

CHAPTER IV.

1798.

The same subject continued.

"In digressing, in dilating, in passing from subject to subject, he appeared to me to float in air, to slide on ice. He told me in confidence (going along) that he should have preached two sermons before he accepted the situation at Shrewsbury, one on Infant Baptism, the other on the Lord's Supper, showing that he could not administer either, which would have effectually disqualified him for the object in view. I observed that he continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the footpath to the other. This struck me as an odd movement; but I did not at that time connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since. He seemed unable to keep on in a straight line. He spoke slightingly of Hume (whose 'Essay on Miracles' he said was stolen from an objection started in one of South's sermons—*Credat Judæus Apella!*). I was not very much pleased at this account of Hume, for I had just been reading, with infinite relish, that completest of all metaphysical *choke-pears*, his 'Treatise on Human

Nature,' to which the 'Essays,' in point of scholastic subtilty and close reasoning, are mere elegant trifling, light summer reading. Coleridge even denied the excellence of Hume's general style, which I think betrayed a want of taste or candour. He however made me amends by the manner in which he spoke of Berkeley. He dwelt particularly on his 'Essay on Vision,' as a masterpiece of analytical reasoning. So it undoubtedly is. He was exceedingly angry with Dr. Johnson for striking the stone with his foot, in allusion to this author's 'Theory of Matter and Spirit,' and saying, 'Thus I confute him, sir.' Coleridge drew a parallel (I don't know how he brought about the connexion) between Bishop Berkeley and Tom Paine. He said the one was an instance of a subtle, the other of an acute mind, than which no two things could be more distinct. The one was a shop-boy's quality, the other the characteristic of a philosopher. He considered Bishop Butler as a true philosopher, a profound and conscientious thinker, a genuine reader of nature and of his own mind. He did not speak of his 'Analogy,' but of his 'Sermons at the Rolls' Chapel,' of which I had never heard. Coleridge somehow always contrived to prefer the *unknown* to the *known*. In this instance he was right. The 'Analogy' is a tissue of sophistry, of wire-drawn, theological special-pleading; the 'Sermons' (with the Preface to them) are in a fine vein of deep, matured reflection, a candid appeal to our observation of human nature, without pedantry and without bias. I told Coleridge I had written a few remarks, and was

sometimes foolish enough to believe that I had made a discovery on the same subject (the 'Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind')—and I tried to explain my view of it to Coleridge, who listened with great willingness, but I did not succeed in making myself understood. I sat down to the task shortly afterwards for the twentieth time, got new pens and paper, determined to make clear work of it, wrote a few meagre sentences in the skeleton-style of a mathematical demonstration, stopped half-way down the second page; and, after trying in vain to pump up any words, images, notions, apprehensions, facts, or observations, from that gulf of abstraction in which I had plunged myself for four or five years preceding, gave up the attempt as labour in vain, and shed tears of helpless despondency on the blank unfinished paper. . . . .

"If I had the quaint muse of Sir Philip Sidney to assist me, I would write a 'Sonnet to the Road between Wem and Shrewsbury,' and immortalise every step of it by some fond enigmatical conceit. I would swear that the very milestones had ears, and that Harmer Hill stooped with all its pines, to listen to a poet, as he passed! I remember but one other topic of discourse in this walk. He mentioned Paley, praised the naturalness and clearness of his style, but condemned his sentiments; thought him a mere time-serving casuist, and said that 'the fact of his work on "Moral and Political Philosophy" being made a text-book in our universities was a disgrace to the national character.' We parted at the six-mile stone; and I returned homeward, pensive but

much pleased. I had met with unexpected notice from a person whom I believed to have been prejudiced against me. 'Kind and affable to me had been his condescension, and should be honoured ever with suitable regard.' He was the first poet I had known, and he certainly answered to that inspired name. I had heard a great deal of his powers of conversation, and was not disappointed. In fact, I never met with anything at all like them, either before or since. I could easily credit the accounts which were circulated of his holding forth to a large party of ladies and gentlemen, an evening or two before, on the Berkeleian Theory, when he made the whole material universe look like a transparency of fine words; and another story (which I believe he has somewhere told himself) of his being asked to a party at Birmingham, of his smoking tobacco and going to sleep after dinner on a sofa, where the company found him to their no small surprise, which was increased to wonder when he started up of a sudden, and rubbing his eyes, looked about him, and launched into a three hours' description of the third heaven, of which he had had a dream. . . .

"On my way back I had a sound in my ears—it was the voice of Fancy; I had a light before me—it was the face of Poetry. The one still lingers there, the other has not quitted my side! Coleridge in truth met me half-way on the ground of philosophy, or I should not have been won over to his imaginative creed. I had an uneasy, pleasurable sensation all the time, till I was to visit him. During those months the

chill breath of winter gave me a welcoming; the vernal air was balm and inspiration to me. The golden sunsets, the silver star of evening, lighted me on my way to new hopes and prospects. *I was to visit Coleridge in the Spring.* This circumstance was never absent from my thoughts, and mingled with all my feelings. I wrote to him at the time proposed, and received an answer postponing my intended visit for a week or two, but very cordially urging me to complete my promise then. This delay did not damp, but rather increased my ardour. In the mean time I went to Llangollen Vale, by way of initiating myself in the mysteries of natural scenery; and I must say I was enchanted with it. I had been reading Coleridge's description of England, in his fine 'Ode on the Departing Year,' and I applied it, *con amore,* to the objects before me. That valley was to me (in a manner) the cradle of a new existence: in the river that winds through it, my spirit was baptized in the waters of Helicon!

"I returned home, and soon after set out on my journey with unworn heart and untried feet. My way lay through Worcester and Gloucester, and by Upton, where I thought of Tom Jones and the adventure of the muff. I remember getting completely wet through one day, and stopping at an inn (I think it was at Tewkesbury), where I sat up all night to read 'Paul and Virginia.' Sweet were the showers in early youth that drenched my body, and sweet the drops of pity that fell upon the books I read! I recollect a remark of Coleridge's upon this very book,—that nothing could show the

gross indelicacy of French manners and the entire corruption of their imagination more strongly than the behaviour of the heroine in the last fatal scene, who turns away from a person on board the sinking vessel, that offers to save her life, because he has thrown off his clothes to assist him in swimming. Was this a time to think of such a circumstance? I once hinted to Wordsworth, as we were sailing in his boat on Grasmere lake, that I thought he had borrowed the idea of his 'Poems on the Naming of Places' from the local inscriptions of the same kind in 'Paul and Virginia.' He did not own the obligation, and stated some distinction without a difference, in defence of his claim to originality. Any the slightest variation would be sufficient for this purpose in his mind; for whatever *he* added or altered would inevitably be worth all that any one else had done, and contain the marrow of the sentiment. I was still two days before the time fixed for my arrival, for I had taken care to set out early enough. I stopped these two days at Bridgewater, and when I was tired of sauntering on the banks of its muddy river, returned to the inn, and read 'Camilla.'

"I arrived, and was well received. The country about Nether-Stowey is beautiful, green and hilly, and near the sea-shore. I saw it but the other day, after an interval of twenty years, from a hill near Taunton. How was the map of my life spread out before me, as the map of the country lay at my feet! In the afternoon Coleridge took me over to All-Foxden,* a romantic

* Two miles from Stowey.

old family mansion of the St. Aubins, where Wordsworth lived. It was then in the possession of a friend of the poet, who gave him the free use of it.* Somehow that period (the time just after the French Revolution) was not a time when *nothing was given for nothing.* The mind opened, and a softness might be perceived coming over the heart of individuals, beneath 'the scales that fence' our self-interest. Wordsworth himself was from home, but his sister kept house, and set before us a frugal repast; and we had free access to her brother's poems, the 'Lyrical Ballads,' which were still in manuscript, or in the form of 'Sibylline Leaves.' I dipped into a few of these with great satisfaction, and with the faith of a novice. I slept that night in an old room with blue hangings, and covered with the round-faced family-portraits of the age of George I. and II., and from the wooded declivity of the adjoining park that overlooked my window, at the dawn of day, could

—— hear the loud stag speak.

"That morning, as soon as breakfast was over, we strolled out into the park, and seating ourselves on the trunk of an old ash tree that stretched along the ground, Coleridge read aloud, with a sonorous and musical voice,

* "I first became acquainted with your father [through meeting him] in Somersetshire, in the autumn of 1797 or the summer of 1798. He was then remarkable for analytical power and for acuteness and originality of mind; and that such intellectual qualities characterized him through life, his writings, as far as I am acquainted with them, sufficiently prove."—*Letter from W. Wordsworth to W. Hazlitt, Jun., May* 23, 1831.

the ballad of 'Betty Foy.' I was not critically or sceptically inclined. I saw touches of truth and nature, and took the rest for granted. But in the 'Thorn,' the 'Mad Mother,' and the 'Complaint of a Poor Indian Woman,' I felt that deeper power and pathos which have been since acknowledged,

> In spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,

as the characteristics of this author; and the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry came over me. It had to me something of the effect that arises from the turning up of the fresh soil, or of the first welcome breath of Spring,

> While yet the trembling year is unconfirmed.

Coleridge and myself walked back to Stowey that evening, and his voice sounded high

> Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
> Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,

as we passed through echoing grove, by fairy stream or waterfall, gleaming in the summer moonlight! He lamented that Wordsworth was not prone enough to believe in the traditional superstitions of the place, and that there was a something corporeal, a *matter-of-fact-ness*, a clinging to the palpable, or often to the petty, in his poetry, in consequence. His genius was not a spirit that descended to him through the air; it sprung out of the ground like a flower, or unfolded itself from a green spray, on which the goldfinch sang. He said, however

(if I remember right), that this objection must be confined to his descriptive pieces; that his philosophic poetry had a grand and comprehensive spirit in it, so that his soul seemed to inhabit the universe like a palace, and to discover truth by intuition, rather than by deduction. The next day Wordsworth arrived from Bristol at Coleridge's cottage. I think I see him now. He answered in some degree to his friend's description of him, but was more gaunt and Don Quixote-like. He was quaintly dressed (according to the *costume* of that unconstrained period) in a brown fustian jacket and striped pantaloons. There was something of a roll, a lounge in his gait, not unlike his own 'Peter Bell.' There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about his temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in objects more than the outward appearance), an intense, high, narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face. Chantrey's bust wants the marking traits, but he was teased into making it regular and heavy. Haydon's head of him, introduced into the *Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem*, is the most like his drooping weight of thought and expression. He sat down and talked very naturally and freely, with a mixture of clear gushing accents in his voice, a deep guttural intonation, and a strong tincture of the northern *burr*, like the crust on wine. He instantly began to make havoc of the half of a Cheshire cheese on the table, and

said triumphantly that 'his marriage with experience had not been so productive as Mr. Southey's in teaching him a knowledge of the good things of this life.' He had been to see the 'Castle Spectre' by Monk Lewis, while at Bristol, and described it very well. He said 'it fitted the taste of the audience like a glove.' This *ad captandum* merit was however by no means a recommendation of it, according to the severe principles of the new school, which reject rather than court popular effect. Wordsworth, looking out of the low latticed window, said, 'How beautifully the sun sets on that yellow bank!' I thought within myself, 'With what eyes these poets see nature!' and ever after, when I saw the sunset stream upon the objects facing it, conceived I had made a discovery, or thanked Mr. Wordsworth for having made one for me! We went over to All-Foxden again the day following, and Wordsworth read us the story of 'Peter Bell' in the open air; and the comment made upon it by his face and voice was very different from that of some later critics! Whatever might be thought of the poem, 'his face was as a book where men might read strange matters,' and he announced the fate of his hero in prophetic tones. There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more

dramatic, the other more *lyrical*. Coleridge has told me that he himself liked to compose in walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood; whereas Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel-walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption. Returning that same evening, I got into a metaphysical argument with Wordsworth, while Coleridge was explaining the different notes of the nightingale to his sister, in which we neither of us succeeded in making ourselves perfectly clear and intelligible."

CHAPTER V.

1798.

The subject concluded.

"THUS I passed three weeks at Nether-Stowey and in the neighbourhood, generally devoting the afternoons to a delightful chat in an arbour made of bark by the poet's friend Tom Poole, sitting under two fine elm trees, and listening to the bees humming round us, while we quaffed our *flip*. It was agreed, among other things, that we should make a jaunt down the Bristol Channel, as far as Linton. We set off together on foot, Coleridge, John Chester, and I. This Chester was a native of Nether-Stowey, one of those who were attracted to Coleridge's discourse as flies are to honey, or bees in swarming-time to the sound of a brass pan. He 'followed in the chace, like a dog who hunts, not like one that made up the cry.' He had on a brown cloth coat, boots, and corduroy breeches, was low in stature, bow-legged, had a drag in his walk like a drover, which he assisted by a hazel switch, and kept on a sort of trot by the side of Coleridge, like a running footman by a state coach, that he might not lose a syllable or sound that fell from Coleridge's lips. He

told me his private opinion, that Coleridge was a wonderful man. He scarcely opened his lips, much less offered an opinion the whole way; yet of the three, had I to choose during that journey, I would be John Chester. He afterwards followed Coleridge into Germany, where the Kantean philosophers were puzzled how to bring him under any of their categories. When he sat down at table with his idol, John's felicity was complete. . . .

"We passed Dunster on our right, a small town between the brow of a hill and the sea. I remember eyeing it wistfully as it lay below us: contrasted with the woody scene around, it looked as clear, as pure, as *embrowned* and ideal, as any landscape I have seen since of Gaspar Poussin's or Domenichino's. We had a long day's march—(our feet kept time to the echoes of Coleridge's tongue)—through Minehead and by the Blue Anchor, and on to Linton, which we did not reach till near midnight, and where we had some difficulty in making a lodgment. We however knocked the people of the house up at last, and we were repaid for our apprehensions and fatigue by some excellent rashers of fried bacon and eggs. The view in coming along had been splendid. We walked for miles and miles on dark-brown heaths overlooking the Channel, with the Welsh hills beyond, and at times descended into little sheltered valleys close by the seaside, with a smuggler's face scowling by us; and then had to ascend conical hills with a path winding up through a coppice to a barren top, like a monk's shaven crown, from one of

which I pointed out to Coleridge's notice the bare masts of a vessel on the very edge of the horizon and within the red-orbed disk of the setting sun, like his own spectre-ship in the 'Ancient Mariner.' At Linton the character of the sea-coast becomes more marked and rugged. There is a place called the *Valley of Rocks* (I suspect this was only the poetical name for it), bedded among precipices overhanging the sea, with rocky caverns beneath, into which the waves dash, and where the seagull for ever wheels its screaming flight. On the tops of these are huge stones thrown transverse, as if an earthquake had tossed them there, and behind these is a fretwork of perpendicular rocks, something like the *Giant's Causeway*. A thunder-storm came on while we were at the inn, and Coleridge was running out bareheaded to enjoy the commotion of the elements in the *Valley of Rocks*; but as if in spite, the clouds only muttered a few angry sounds, and let fall a few refreshing drops. Coleridge told me that he and Wordsworth were to have made this place the scene of a prose tale, which was to have been in the manner of, but far superior to, the 'Death of Abel,' but they had relinquished the design.

"In the morning of the second day we breakfasted luxuriously in an old-fashioned parlour, on tea, toast, eggs, and honey, in the very sight of the beehives from which it had been taken and a garden full of thyme and wild flowers that had produced it. On this occasion Coleridge spoke of Virgil's 'Georgics,' but not well. I do not think he had much feeling for the classical or

elegant. It was in this room that we found a little worn-out copy of the 'Seasons,' lying in a window-seat, on which Coleridge exclaimed, '*That* is true fame!' He said Thomson was a great poet rather than a good one; his style was as meretricious as his thoughts were natural. He spoke of Cowper as the best modern poet. He said the 'Lyrical Ballads' were an experiment about to be tried by him and Wordsworth, to see how far the public taste would endure poetry written in a more natural and simple style than had hitherto been attempted; totally discarding the artifices of poetical diction, and making use only of such words as had probably been common in the most ordinary language since the days of Henry II. Some comparison was introduced between Shakspeare and Milton. He said 'he hardly knew which to prefer. Shakspeare seemed to him a mere stripling in the art; he was as tall and as strong, with infinitely more activity than Milton, but he never appeared to have come to man's estate; or if he had, he would not have been a man, but a monster.' He spoke with contempt of Gray, and with intolerance of Pope. He did not like the versification of the latter. He observed that 'the ears of these couplet-writers might be charged with having short memories, that could not retain the harmony of whole passages.' He thought little of Junius as a writer; he had a dislike of Dr. Johnson; and a much higher opinion of Burke, as an orator and politician, than of Fox or Pitt. He however thought him very inferior in richness of style and imagery to some of our elder prose writers, par-

ticularly Jeremy Taylor. He liked Richardson, but not Fielding; nor could I get him to enter into the merits of 'Caleb Williams.'* In short, he was profound and discriminating with respect to those authors whom he liked, and where he gave his judgment fair play; capricious, perverse, and prejudiced in his antipathies and distastes. We loitered on the 'ribbed sea-sands,' in such talk as this a whole morning, and I recollect met with a curious seaweed, of which John Chester told us the country name! A fisherman gave Coleridge an account of a boy that had been drowned the day before, and that they had tried to save him at the risk of their own lives. He said 'he did not know how it was that they ventured, but, sir, we have a *nature* towards one another." This expression, Coleridge remarked to me, was a fine illustration of that theory of disinterestedness which I (in common with Butler) had adopted. I broached to him an argument of mine to prove that *likeness* was not mere association of ideas. I said that the mark in the sand put one in mind of a man's foot, not because it was part of a former impression of a man's foot (for it was quite new), but because it was like the shape of a man's foot. He assented to the justness of this distinction (which I

* He had no idea of pictures, of Claude or Raphael, and at this time I had as little as he. He somewhere gives a striking account of the Cartoons at Pisa, by Buffamalco and others; of one in particular, where Death is seen in the air, brandishing his scythe, and the great and mighty of the earth shudder at his approach, while the beggars and the wretched kneel to him as their deliverer. He would of course understand so broad and fine a moral as this at any time.

have explained at length elsewhere, for the benefit of the curious), and John Chester listened; not from any interest in the subject, but because he was astonished that I should be able to suggest anything to Coleridge that he did not already know. We returned on the third morning, and Coleridge remarked the silent cottage-smoke curling up the valleys where, a few evenings before, we had seen the lights gleaming through the dark.

"In a day or two after we arrived at Stowey we set out, I on my return home, and he for Germany. It was a Sunday morning, and he was to preach that day for Dr. Toulmin of Taunton. I asked him if he had prepared anything for the occasion? He said he had not even thought of the text, but should, as soon as we parted. I did not go to hear him—this was a fault—but we met in the evening at Bridgewater. The next day we had a long day's walk to Bristol, and sat down, I recollect, by a well-side on the road, to cool ourselves and satisfy our thirst, when Coleridge repeated to me some descriptive lines from his tragedy of 'Remorse:'—

> Oh memory! shield me from the world's poor strife,
> And give those scenes thine everlasting life.

"I saw no more of him for a year or two, during which period he had been wandering in the Hartz Forest in Germany; and his return was cometary, meteorous, unlike his setting out."

Coleridge was my grandfather's earliest literary ac-

quaintance, as he was Lamb's. The friendship of Lamb and Coleridge (not reckoning their school-day connexion) dated from 1796; the friendship of my grandfather and Coleridge commenced in 1798. In the case of Lamb the tie was a life-tie, but in my grandfather's not so. My grandfather was a politician, and Lamb was none. Lamb had no feelings or resentments of party; and Coleridge the *Jacobin*, and Coleridge the friend of Quarterly Reviewers, was the same "dearest friend" to him. But Coleridge's secession from Liberalism estranged him from my grandfather, as it also estranged Southey. Perhaps the bond of union between him and Elia was weakened by the catholicism of Elia's attachments, irrespectively of political opinions. I suspect strongly that Lamb gained very largely in my grandfather's estimation by his letter in the 'London Magazine' to Robert Southey, Esq., but Lamb was not himself in that letter; he was sorry for it; it was an outburst of indignation, which quickly subsided; and Southey was at Lamb's side, within a few days, as warm a friend as ever.

My grandfather would have liked Lamb all the better, if he had been a man of stancher mind, a person who had set out with convictions from which there was to be no swerve. Lamb sinned in my grandfather's eyes in having too much *good-fellowship*, in shaking everybody round by the hand with a sincerity which a careful study of his correspondence, *in its entire and undiluted state*, leaves painfully questionable.

Yet my grandfather was fond of reverting to these

old reminiscences to the very last, of thinking of Coleridge as he knew and saw him in 1798. In one of his latest efforts as an essay-writer, he speaks of "his old friend" Coleridge.

I find these observations of his upon Coleridge elsewhere:—

"I remember once saying to Mr. ———, a great while ago, that I did not seem to have altered any of my ideas since I was sixteen years old. 'Why then,' said he, 'you are no wiser now than you were then!

"I might make the same confession, and the same retort would apply still.

"Coleridge used to tell me that this pertinacity was owing to a want of sympathy with others. What he calls *sympathising with others* is their admiring him; and it must be admitted that he varies his battery pretty often, in order to accommodate himself to this sort of mutual understanding.

"But I do not agree in what he says of me. On the other hand, I think that it is my sympathising *beforehand* with the different views and feelings that may be entertained on a subject, that prevents me retracting my judgment, and flinging myself into the contrary extreme *afterwards*. . . I cannot say that, from my own experience, I have found that the persons most remarkable for sudden and violent changes of principle have been cast in the softest and most susceptible mould. . . .

"I can hardly consider Mr. Coleridge a deserter from the cause he first espoused, unless one could tell what

cause he ever heartily espoused, or what party he ever belonged to in downright earnest. . .

"I have been delighted to hear him expatiate with the most natural and affecting simplicity on a favourite passage or picture, and all the while afraid of agreeing with him, lest he should instantly turn round and unsay all that he had said, for fear of my going away with too good an opinion of my own taste, a too great an admiration of my idol—and his own.

"I dare not ask his opinion twice, if I have got a favourable sentence once, lest he should belie his own sentiments to stagger mine. I have heard him talk divinely (like one inspired) of Boccaccio, and the story of the 'Pot of Basil,' describing 'how it grew, and it grew, and it grew,' till you saw it spread its tender leaves in the light of his eye, and wave in the tremulous sound of his voice; and yet, if you asked him about it another time, he would, perhaps, affect to think little of it, or to have forgotten the circumstance.

"When I cease[d] to hear him quite, other tongues, tuned to what accents they may [be] of praise or blame, would sound dull, ungrateful, out of tune, and harsh, in the comparison."

Coleridge it was who "encouraged him to write a book, which he did, according to the original bent of his mind (these are my grandfather's own words)," and the result, after eight years' labour, was the 'Essay on the Principles of Human Actions,' which few have read, and fewer have appreciated. The intellectual profit

from this association with Coleridge and Wordsworth was in other ways very considerable.

Of Mr. Hazlitt's tour in Wales in 1798, between the time that Coleridge visited his father at Wem and his own journey to Somersetshire in the same Spring, to see Coleridge, he has spoken slightly in the account of his first acquaintance with the poet and philosopher. But what follows will help to cast a little further light on this tour in the Principality, as well as on that into the west.

"I have certainly spent some enviable hours at inns —sometimes when I have been left entirely to myself, and have tried to solve some metaphysical problem; as once at Witham Common, where I found out the proof that likeness is not a case of the association of ideas— at other times, when there have been pictures in the room, as at St. Neots (I think it was), where I first met with Gribelin's engravings of the Cartoons, into which I entered at once; and at a little inn on the borders of Wales, where there happened to be hanging some of Westall's drawings, which I compared triumphantly (for a theory that I had, not for the admired artist) with the figure of a girl who had ferried me over the Severn, standing up in the boat between me and the twilight— at other times I might mention luxuriating in books, with a peculiar interest in this way, as I remember sitting up half the night to read 'Paul and Virginia,' which I picked up at an inn at Bridgewater, after being drenched in the rain all day; and at the same place I got through two volumes of Madame D'Arblay's 'Camilla.'

It was on the 10th of April, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the 'New Héloise,' at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. The letter I chose was that in which St. Preux describes his feelings as he first caught a glimpse from the heights of the Jura of the Pays de Vaud, which I had brought with me as a *bonne bouchée* to crown the evening with. It was my birthday, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighbourhood to visit this delightful spot. . . . How proud, how glad I was to walk along the high road that overlooks the delicious prospect, repeating the lines which I have just quoted from Mr. Coleridge's poems. . . . I would return some time or other to this enchanted spot, but I would return to it alone. What other self could I find to share that influx of thoughts, of regret, and delight, the fragments of which I could hardly conjure up to myself. . . . . I could stand on some tall rock and overlook the precipice of years that separates me from what I then was. I was at that time going shortly to visit the poet I have above named.

"The best part of our lives we pass in counting on what is to come, or in fancying what may have happened, in real or fictitious story, to others. I have had more pleasure in reading the adventures of a novel (and perhaps changing situations with the hero) than I ever had in my own. I do not think any one can feel much happier—a greater degree of heart's ease—than I used to feel in reading 'Tristram Shandy,' and 'Peregrine Pickle,' and 'Tom Jones,' and the 'Tatler,' and

'Gil Blas of Santillane,' and Werter, and Boccaccio. It was some years after that I read the last, but his tales

> Dallied with the innocence of love,
> Like the old time.

The story of Federigo Alberigi affected me as if it had been my own case; and I saw his hawk upon her perch, in the clear, cold air, and 'how fat and fair a bird she was,' as plain as ever I saw a picture of Titian's; and felt that I should have served her up, as he did, as a banquet for his mistress, who came to visit him at his own poor farm. . . . Mrs. Inchbald was always a great favourite with me. There is the true soul of woman breathing from what she writes, as much as if you heard her voice. It is as if Venus had written books. I first read her 'Simple Story' (of all places in the world) at Mr. ——'s. No matter where it was, for it transported me out of myself. I recollect walking out to escape from one of the tenderest parts, in order to return to it again with double relish. An old crazy hand-organ was playing 'Robin Adair,' a summer shower dropped manna on my head, and slaked my feverish thirst of happiness. Her heroine, Miss Milner, was at my side. My dream has since been verified—how like it was to the reality! . . . I once sat on a sunny bank in a field, in which the green blades of corn waved in the fitful northern breeze, and read the letter in the 'New Héloise' in which St. Preux describes the Pays de Vaud. I never felt what Shakspeare calls 'my glassy essence' so much as then. My thoughts were pure and free. . . . I wished I could

have written such a letter. . . . Of all the pictures, prints, or drawings I ever saw, none ever gave me such satisfaction as the rude etchings at the top of Rousseau's 'Confessions.' . . . It is not even said anywhere that such is the case, but I had got it in my head that the rude sketches of old-fashioned houses, stone walls, and stumps of trees, represented the scenes at Annecy and Vevay, where he who relished all more sharply than others, and by his own intense aspirations after good, had nearly delivered mankind from the yoke of evil, first drew the breath of hope.

"The last time I tasted the luxury of an inn in its full perfection was one day after a sultry day's walk in summer between Farnham and Alton. I was fairly tired out; I walked into an inn-yard (I think at the latter place); I was shown by the waiter to what looked at first like common outhouses at the other end of it, but they turned out to be a suite of rooms, probably a hundred years old. The one I entered opened into an old-fashioned garden, embellished with beds of larkspur and a leaden Mercury; it was wainscoted, and there was a grave-looking, dark-coloured portrait of Charles II. hanging up on the tiled chimney-piece. I had 'Love for Love' in my pocket, and began to read. Coffee was brought in in a silver coffee-pot; the cream, the bread and butter, everything was excellent, and the flavour of Congreve's style prevailed over all.

"I prolonged the entertainment till a late hour, and relished this divine comedy better even than when I used to see it played by Miss Mellon as *Miss Prue;* Bob

Palmer as *Tattle;* and Bannister as honest *Ben.* This circumstance happened just five years ago, and it seems like yesterday. If I count my life so by lustres, it will soon glide away; yet I shall not have to repine, if, while it lasts, it is enriched with a few such recollections!"

But my grandfather was not long before he found another congenial and improving mind. During a visit to Hertfordshire, under I know not what circumstances, he made the acquaintance of a gentleman, on whose friendship he looked back through life with pleasure and pride. I shall leave him, as usual, to speak for himself:—

"The person of the most refined and least contracted taste I ever knew was the late Joseph Fawcett, the friend of my youth. He was almost the first literary acquaintance I ever made, and I think the most candid and unsophisticated. He had a masterly perception of all styles and of every kind and degree of excellence, sublime or beautiful, from Milton's 'Paradise Lost" to Shenstone's 'Pastoral Ballad;' from Butler's 'Analogy' down to 'Humphrey Clinker.' If you had a favourite author, he had read him too, and knew all the best morsels, the subtle *traits,* the capital touches. 'Do you like Sterne?'—'Yes, to be sure,' he would say, 'I should deserve to be hanged if I didn't.' His repeating some parts of 'Comus,' with his fine, deep, mellow-toned voice, particularly the lines,

I have heard my mother Circe with the Sirens three, &c.,

and the enthusiastic comments he made afterwards, were

a feast to the ear and to the soul. He read the poetry of Milton with the same fervour and spirit of devotion that I have since heard others read their own. 'That is the most delicious feeling of all,' I have heard him exclaim, 'to like what is excellent, no matter whose it is.' In this respect he practised what he preached. He was incapable of harbouring a sinister motive, and judged only from what he felt. There was no flaw or mist in the clear mirror of his mind. He was open to impressions as he was strenuous in maintaining them. He did not care a rush whether a writer was old or new, in prose or in verse. 'What he wanted,' he said, 'was something to make him think.'

"Most men's minds are to me like musical instruments out of tune. Touch a particular key, and it jars and makes harsh discord with your own. They like 'Gil Blas,' but can see nothing to laugh at in 'Don Quixote;' they adore Richardson, but are disgusted with Fielding.

"Fawcett had a taste accommodated to all these. He was not exceptious. He gave a cordial welcome to all sorts, provided they were the best in their kind. He was not fond of counterfeits or duplicates. His own style was laboured and artificial to a fault, while his character was frank and ingenuous in the extreme. He was not the only individual whom I have known to counteract their natural disposition in coming before the public; and in avoiding what they perhaps thought an inherent infirmity, debar themselves of their real strength and advantages.

"A heartier friend or honester critic I never coped withal. He has made me feel (by contrast) the want of genuine sincerity and generous sentiment in some that I have listened to since. . . . I would rather be a man of disinterested taste and liberal feeling, to see and acknowledge truth and beauty wherever I found it, than a man of greater and more original genius, to hate, envy, and deny all excellence but my own—but that poor scanty pittance of it (compared with the whole) which I had myself produced.

"It was he who delivered the Sunday evening lectures at the Old Jewry, which were so popular about twenty years ago. He afterwards retired to Hedgegrove, in Hertfordshire.

"It was here that I first became acquainted with him, and passed some of the pleasantest days of my life. He was the first person of literary eminence whom I had then known; and the conversations I had with him on subjects of taste and philosophy (for his taste was as refined as his powers of reasoning were profound and subtle) gave me a delight such as I can never feel again.

"The writings of Sterne, Fielding, Cervantes, Richardson, Rousseau, Godwin, Goethe, &c., were the usual subjects of our discourse, and the pleasure I had had in reading these authors seemed more than doubled.

"Of all the persons I have ever known, he was the most perfectly free from every taint of jealousy or narrowness. Never did a mean or sinister motive come near his heart. He was one of the most enthusiastic admirers of the French Revolution; and I believe that

the disappointment of the hopes he had cherished of the freedom and happiness of mankind preyed upon his mind, and hastened his death.

"Fawcett used to say that if Sir Isaac Newton himself had lisped, he could not have thought anything of him. Coleridge, I recollect, once asked me whether I thought that the different members of a family really liked one another so well, or had so much attachment as was generally supposed; and I said that I conceived the regard they had towards each other was expressed by the word *interest*, rather than by any other; which he said was the true answer.

Mr. Fawcett was a friend of Godwin's. My grandfather says:—"Mr. Fawcett (an old friend and fellow-student of our author, and who always spoke of his writings with admiration tinctured with wonder) used to mention a circumstance with respect to his 'Life of Chatham,' which may throw some light on the history and progress of Mr. Godwin's mind.

"He was anxious to make his biographical account as complete as he could, and applied for this purpose to many of his acquaintance to furnish him with anecdotes or to suggest criticisms. Amongst others, Mr. Fawcett repeated to him what he thought a striking passage on *general warrants*, delivered by Lord Chatham, at which he (Mr. Fawcett) had been present. 'Every man's house' (said this emphatic thinker and speaker) 'has been called his castle. And why is it called his castle? Is it because it is defended by a wall, because it is sur-

rounded by a moat. No; it may be nothing more than a straw-built shed. It may be open to all the elements, the wind may enter in, the rain may enter in, but the king cannot enter in.' His friend thought that the point here was palpable enough; but when he came to read the printed volumes he found it thus *transposed*. 'Every man's house is his castle. And why is it called so? Is it because it is defended by a wall, because it is surrounded with a moat? No, it may be nothing more than a straw-built shed. It may be exposed to all the elements, the rain may enter into it, *all the winds of heaven may whistle round it,* but the king cannot, &c.' This was what Fawcett called a defect of *natural imagination.*"

I have thus gathered into one point of view the notices of Mr. Fawcett scattered through his friend's works, from a desire that the public should know a little more than they do of a man who stood so high in Mr. Hazlitt's opinion, and who seems to have fully deserved the place which he held there. There was a report current after Mr. Fawcett's death that Mr. Hazlitt intended to draw up his life; but whether true or no, the design was never carried out.

Among the books which I trace to him in early days were 'The New Héloise' in the English translation, 4 vols. duodecimo, 'The Sentimental Journey,' St. John's Letters ('The American Farmer'), 'The Tatler,' 'Gil Blas,' 'Corinne,' Mrs. Inchbald and Mrs. Barbauld,* Rich-

* The two *Bald* women, as Lamb called them.

ardson and Fielding, and Smollett, and the 'Arabian Nights'—and Shakspeare.

He was a spare reader, and the narrowness of his attainments in this branch of study told against him beyond question. But he had no inclination for the general run of authors, ancient or modern, and he wanted no better or stronger reason for steering clear of them. A little later on he made the acquaintance of the 'Seasons' and the 'Castle of Indolence,' and still later, of the 'Waverley Novels.' He once paid five shillings at a library for the loan of 'Woodstock.'

"I knew Tom Jones by heart, and was deep in Peregrine Pickle. I was intimately acquainted with all the heroes and heroines of Richardson's romances, and could turn from one to the other as I pleased. I could con over that single passage in 'Pamela' about her 'lumpish heart,' and never have done admiring the skill of the author and the truth of nature.

"For my part I have doubts of his (Tom Jones) being so very handsome, from the author's always talking about his beauty; and I suspect that he was a clown, from being constantly assured that he was so very genteel.

"I am no friend to repeating-watches. The only pleasant association I have with them is the account given by Rousseau of one French lady, who sat up reading the 'New Héloise,' when it first came out—and ordering her maid to sound the repeater, found it was too late to go to bed, and continued reading on till morning. . . . . In general, I have heard repeating-

watches sounded in stage-coaches at night, when some fellow-traveller, suddenly awaking and wondering what was the hour, another has very deliberately taken out his watch, and pressing the spring, it has counted out the time.

"I remember, as long ago as the year 1798, going to a neighbouring town (Shrewsbury, where Farquhar has laid the plot of his 'Recruiting Officer'), and bringing home with me, 'at one proud swoop,' a copy of Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' and another of Burke's 'Reflections on the French Revolution.'"

CHAPTER VI.

1792-1803.

Abandonment of the Church — Election of a profession — Determination to follow painting as a means of subsistence —Application to the new study—His early efforts—Journey to Paris—in the Louvre—Letters from the Louvre (1802).

SOME time before his interview with Coleridge, in 1798, Mr. Hazlitt had, to his father's great sorrow, relinquished all idea of the ministry. I do not think that for several years he had any fixed notion in his mind as to settlement in life; he went on, week after week, and month after month, thinking and reading. And this was his existence, these were his happiest days.

I trace him very little indeed between 1798 and 1802, except that he was at this time a reader of Coleridge's articles in the *Morning Post*, and that upon some of them which appeared in February, 1800, and a few conversations which took place with the writer afterwards, he based a pamphlet published by him in 1806.

The next that we hear of him is that he has resolved, under his brother John's encouragement and recommendation, to become an artist; and is going to Paris to study at the Louvre, after a preliminary induction into the rudiments of painting by John.

The latter had been hard at work all these years—from 1788 to 1802; his practice was rapidly increasing, and his name punctually made its appearance among the annual exhibitors at the Academy. He had moved from Holborn to 65, Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, in 1789; in 1790 he was at 139, Long Acre; and here he remained till 1795, when he went to 6, Suffolk Street, Middlesex Hospital. But in 1802 his residence was No. 12, Rathbone Place, where in fact he had been since 1799. In this year the Academy accepted and hung his portraits of Mr. Coleridge and of Mrs. Hazlitt, his mother.

I apprehend, and I am sorry that I can do nothing better, that my grandfather resided under his brother's roof for a certain term preparatorily to his visit abroad. It was now that he first saw Holcroft and Northcote, with both of whom his brother was intimate. The first gave him a letter to Mr. Merrimee, and the latter accepted his proposal to make some copies for him at the Louvre, "as well as he could." So through his brother, and by his own force of character besides, his circle began now to widen, and to include a few names distinguished in literature and art.

I should have liked to feel myself touching ground of a more solid description just here; but it cannot be helped. I have only to observe that my grandfather's visit to Burleigh, about 1795, was probably the earliest occasion on which he had an opportunity of seeing any specimens of the great masters; and that the powerful bent communicated to his mind and taste in this direc-

tion may be considered as dating from his seventeenth or eighteenth year.

Let us return to firm land. He left England, with some excellent introductions, in the middle of October, 1802, and proceeded by Calais. He says:—

"Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears; nor did the mariners' hymn, which was sung from the top of an old crazy vessel in the harbour, as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity."

He arrived at Paris on the 15th of the month, and put up at the Hôtel Coq Heron. Of his doings while here on this, to him delightful, errand, he is his own best and indeed only historian, as in so many other cases:—

"My first initiation in the mysteries of the art was at the Orleans Gallery: it was there I formed my taste. . . . . I was staggered when I saw the works there collected, and looked at them with wondering and with longing eyes. A mist passed away from my sight: the scales fell off. . . . . .

"'This was the more remarkable, as it was but a short time before that I was not only totally ignorant of, but insensible to, the beauties of art. As an instance, I remember that one afternoon I was reading the 'Provoked Husband' with the highest relish, with a green woody landscape of Ruysdael or Hobbima just before me, at which I looked off the book now and then, and wondered what there could be in that sort of work to satisfy or de-

light the mind—at the same time asking myself, as a speculative question, whether I should ever feel an interest in it like what I took in reading Vanbrugh and Cibber?

"I had made some progress in painting when I went to the Louvre to study, and I never did anything afterwards. I shall never forget conning over the catalogue, which a friend lent me just before I set out. The pictures, the names of the painters, seemed to relish in the mouth. . . . . .

"The first day I got there I was kept for some time in the French Exhibition-room, and thought I should not be able to get a sight of the old masters. I just caught a peep at them through the door: . . . At last, by much importunity, I was admitted, and lost not an instant in making use of my new privilege—it was *un beau jour* to me."

Then we come to the correspondence which he opened with his father, and of which these letters are the sole remaining portion. They throw a light upon his character and upon his life which we should seek elsewhere in vain. Of his father's letters to him there is no longer the slightest trace:—

"Paris, à l'Hôtel Coq Heron,
"Rue Coq Heron, pres la Palais Royal,
"16th October, 1802.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"I arrived here yesterday. . . . Calais is a miserable place in itself, but the remains of the fortifi-

cations about it are very beautiful. There are several ranges of ramparts, and ditches one within another, 'wall within wall, mural protection intricate.' The hand of time is very evident upon both; the ditches are filled with reeds and long grass, and the walls are very much decayed, and grown very dark coloured. (I am so perplexed with French that I can hardly recollect a word of English.) The country till within a few miles of Paris was barren and miserable. There were great numbers of beggars at all the towns we passed through. The vineyards near this have a most delightful appearance; they look richer than any kind of agricultural production that we have in England, particularly the red vines, with which many of the vineyards are covered. Paris is very dirty and disagreeable, except along the river side. Here it is much more splendid than any part of London. The Louvre is one of the buildings which overlook it. I went there this morning as soon as I had got my *card of security* from the police-office. I had some difficulty in getting admission to the Italian pictures, as the fellows who kept the doors make a trade of it, and I was condemned to the purgatory of the modern French gallery for some time. At last some one gave me a hint of what was expected, and I passed through. The pictures are admirable, particularly the historical pieces by Rubens. They are superior to anything I saw, except one picture by Raphael. The portraits are not so good as I expected. Titian's best portraits I did not see, as they were put by to be copied. The landscapes are for the most part exquisite. I in-

tend to copy two out of the five I am to do for Railton.* I promised Northcote to copy Titian's portrait of Hippolito de Medici for him. He had a print of it lying on the floor one morning when I called on him, and was saying that it was one of the finest pictures in the whole world; on which I told him that it was now at the Louvre, and that if he would give me leave, I would copy it for him as well as I could. He said I should delight him if I would, and was evidently excessively pleased. Holcroft is in London. He gave me a letter to Mr. Merrimee, the same painter to whom Freebairn's letter was. I called on him this afternoon, and he is to go with me in the morning to obtain permission for me to copy any pictures which I like, and to assist me in procuring paints, canvas, &c. . . . . I hope my mother is quite easy, as I hope to do very well. My love to her and Peggy.

"I am your affectionate,

"W. HAZLITT."

"Paris, at the Hôtel Coq Heron, Rue Coq Heron,
"Thursday, October 20th, 1802.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"I have begun to copy one of Titian's portraits. . . . . I made a very complete sketch of the head in about three hours, and have been working upon it longer this morning; I hope to finish it next week. To-morrow and Saturday I can do nothing to it;

* Of Liverpool.

there are only four days in the week in which one is allowed to, or at least able to, do anything. Friday is allotted to sweeping the rooms, and Saturday and Sunday are usually visiting days. There are great numbers of people in the rooms (most of them *English*) every day, and I was afraid at first that this would confuse and hinder me; but I found on beginning to copy that I was too occupied in my work to attend much to, or to care at all about what was passing around me; or if this had any effect upon me indirectly, it was to make me more attentive to what I was about. In order that I and my copy might not fall into contempt, I intend to employ the vacant days of the week in making duplicates of the copies which I do here, and in doing a picture of myself, in the same view as that of Hippolito de Medici, by Titian, which I intend to begin upon to-morrow. This, it is true, will occasion an increase in the expense, but I shall do them better here, at least the duplicates, than I could at home, and it will be necessary for me to have them as models to keep by me. The pictures I wish to copy are the following:—1st. Portrait of a young man in black, and very dark complexion, by Titian.* This is the one I am doing. 2nd. Another portrait, by Titian. 3rd. The portrait by Titian of Hippolito de Medicis.† 4th. Portrait of a lady, by Vandyke. 5th. Portrait of the Cardinal Bentivoglio, by Vandyke also. 6th. Leo X., by Raphael. If I cannot get them removed into the room, either

* Which he did. It is still in the possession of the family.

† The same observation applies to this.

through the influence of Mr. Merrimee or by bribing the keepers, I shall substitute either Titian's Mistress, or a head of a Sibyl, by Guercino, a very good painter, or two landscapes in the room. The finest picture in the collection is the Transfiguration, by Raphael. This is without any exception the finest picture I ever saw; I mean the human part of it, because the figure of Christ, and the angels, or whatever they are, that are flying to meet him in the air, are to the last degree contemptible. The picture of the Taking down from the Cross, by Rubens, which I have heard John describe, is here. It is a very fine one. One of the pictures is Reynolds' picture of the Marquis of Granby. Mr. Merrimee came to look at the [young man in] black and the old woman, which he liked very much, though they are contrary to the French style; on the other hand, without vanity be it spoken, they are very much in the style of the Flemish and Italian painters. I like them better, instead of worse, from comparing them with the pictures that are here. The modern French pictures are many of them excellent in many particulars, though not in the most material. I find myself very comfortable here.

"With my love to my mother, John, and Peggy, I am your affectionate son,

"W. HAZLITT.

"I saw Bonaparte."

"Sunday, November 14th, 1802.

"My dear Father,

"A fortnight ago to-morrow I began a copy of a picture I had not seen before—the subject of which is described in the catalogue in this manner—'852, by Lodovic Lana, born at Modena, in 1597; died in 1646. The death of Clorinda.*—Clorinda, having been mortally wounded in battle by Tancred, is seen lying at the foot of a tree, her bosom bare, discovering the place where she was wounded. On the point of expiring she desires to receive the baptismal sacrament; and while Tancred administers it to her with the water he has brought in his helmet from a neighbouring spring, she holds out her hand to him, in token of forgiveness, and breathes her last.' It is, in my mind, the sweetest picture in the place. My canvas is not so large as the other, but it includes both the figures, which are of the size of life. I have worked upon it forty hours, that is seven mornings, and am going over the whole of it again this week, by the end of which I intend to have it finished. I propose to complete the copy of Titian, which I began the week following, in five weeks from the time I got here. The three heads, which I shall then have to do, I shall, I think, be able to do in the same time, allowing three weeks for another portrait by Titian, and a head of Christ crowned with thorns, by Guido, and two more for Titian's Mistress, in which the neck and arms are seen. I shall then, if I have time, do a copy of the Cardinal Bentivoglio, which is at present exhibited in the great

* He finished this task, and the picture is still in the family.

room, and probably some others. But the first five I have mentioned I have certainly fixed upon. I generally go to the Museum about half-past nine or ten o'clock, and continue there until half-past three or four. Charles Fox was there two or three mornings. He talked a great deal, and was full of admiration. I have not yet seen Bonaparte near. He is not in Paris.

"With love to all,

"I am your affectionate son,

"W. HAZLITT."

"Friday, November 29th, 1802.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"I received your letter on Sunday. I wrote to you that day fortnight; I am, therefore, sorry that you did not receive my letter sooner. I there gave you an account of what pictures I had been doing, and of what I intended to do. The copy of the Death of Clorinda is as good as finished, though I shall have to go over the most of it again when it is quite dry. The copy of Titian is also brought forward as much as it could be till it is dry; for, as the room is not kept very warm, the pictures do not dry fast enough to be done out and out. I have been working upon the portrait of Titian's Mistress, as it is called, these two last days. I intend to complete this the beginning of next week, if possible; the rest of that week and the two following I shall devote to going over and completing the other two. If I succeed in this, which I am pretty confident of doing,

I shall have done eight of my pictures in eight weeks, from the time I came here. But as one of them contains two whole figures, it may be reckoned equal to two; so that I shall have gone on at the rate of a portrait in a fortnight. I shall, therefore, have a month left to do the other two heads, which will make up the whole number. I intend to give an hour a day to copying a Holy Family, by Raphael, one of the most beautiful things in the world. Of this, and the Death of Clorinda, I shall probably be able to get prints taken in London, as this is frequently done; as my copies certainly contain all that is wanted for a print, which has nothing to do with colouring. I intend to write to Robinson about it. I was introduced this morning to Mr. Cosway, who is here, doing sketches of the pictures in the Louvre by a Mr. Pellegrini, whose pictures John knows very well, and whom I have seen with Mr. Merrimee. If Railton chooses, I will do a copy of a most divine landscape, by Rubens, for him; but it will take at least a fortnight to do it, most probably three weeks. I have heard from Loftus.* This is all I can recollect at present, except my love, &c.

"Your affectionate son,

"W. HAZLITT.

"I would have written a longer letter if I had had time."

* His cousin, on his mother's side.

"December 10th, 1802.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"I yesterday morning completed my copy of the picture called The Death of Clorinda; I have been, in all, fifteen mornings about it. It is a very good copy; when I say this, I mean that it has very nearly all the effect of the picture, and will certainly make as great a figure in Railton's parlour as the original does in the Louvre. It has been praised by some of the French painters. They have begun of late to compliment me on my style of getting on; though, at first, they were disposed to be very impertinent. This is the way of the world; you are always sure of getting encouragement when you do not want it. After I had done my picture yesterday, I took a small canvas, which I had in the place, and began a sketch of a head in one of the large historical pictures, being very doubtful if I could; not at all expecting to finish it, but merely to pass away the time: however, in a couple of hours, I made a very fair copy, which I intend to let remain as it is. It is a side face, a good deal like yours, which was one reason of my doing it so rapidly. I got on in such a rapid style, that an Englishman, who had a party with him, came up, and told me, in French, that I was doing very well. Upon my answering him in English he seemed surprised, and said, 'Upon my word, sir, you get on with great spirit and boldness; you do us great credit, I am sure.' He afterwards returned; and after asking how long I had been about it, said he was the more satisfied with his judgment, as he did not know I was a country-

man. Another wanted to know if I taught painting in oil. I told him that I stood more in need of instruction myself; that that sort of rapid sketching was what I did better than anything else; and that, after the first hour or two, I generally made my pictures worse and worse, the more pains I took with them. However, seriously, I was much pleased with this kind of notice, as however confident I may be of the real merit of my work, it is not always so clear that it is done in a way to please most other people. This same sketch is certainly a very singular thing, as I do not believe there are ten people in the world who could do it in the same way. However, I have said enough on the subject. I shall go on with this business, as I find it succeed. I intend to copy a composition of Rubens in this manner, which I can do at intervals, without interfering with my regular work. The copy of Titian's Mistress, and the other, which I began from him, I purpose finishing in the six following days, and another copy of Titian in the six after that; which will be four out of the five which I am doing for Railton. I shall want another fortnight for the copy of Guido; and it will take another fortnight, if I do that for Northcote. This will make fourteen weeks. I have been here seven already. I will now enumerate the pictures I have done, or am doing: 1. The Death of Clorinda, completed. 2. Portrait of a Man in Black, by Titian, nearly finished. 3. Titian's Mistress; this will take four days more to finish it. 4. Portrait of another Man in black, by the same, not yet begun. 5. Christ Crowned with Thorns, by Guido, not begun.

6. Hippolito de Medici. As I have six hours to work every morning, from ten till four, I intend to give an hour to making rough copies for myself. In this way I shall make a sketch of the head I mentioned; and I propose doing a Holy Family, from Raphael (a very small picture), and a larger copy, from Rubens, in the same way. My love to all.

"Yours affectionately,

"W. HAZLITT."

"Paris, January 7th, 1803.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"I finished, as far as I intend, the copy of Hippolito de Medici, for Northcote, the day after I wrote to him; and the day following I began a copy of a part of the Transfiguration, by Raphael, which had not been exhibited in the common or large room till the week before. I have nearly done the head of the boy, who is supposed to see Christ in his Ascension from the Mount, and who is the principal figure in the piece. I shall paint it in another morning. It is the best copy I have done, though I have been only fifteen hours about it. There will be two other figures included in the canvas; this is 4 feet 8 in. high, and 10 feet 8 in. in breadth. You will easily get a distinct idea of the size of the picture by measuring it on the parlour floor. Northcote's copy, and that of the Death of Clorinda, are the same size. The Transfiguration itself is about three times as high, and three times as wide. It is by no means the

largest, though it is the finest figure-picture in the place. I am about a second copy of the de Medici for Railton. I shall have done it in two or three days more. I have also finished, since I wrote last, the first copy which I began, from Titian.

"I am your affectionate son,

"W. HAZLITT."

Mr. Hazlitt remained altogether four months in Paris studying, and during that time he made many copies and sketches. His Hippolito de Medici and a Young Nobleman with a Glove, both from Titian, and the Death of Clorinda, by Lana, are in the possession of the family; but the others which he executed were, of course, dispersed among those for whom he was commissioned, or their representatives.

He never ceased to look back fondly and regretfully at this epoch in his career. It was one long "beau jour" to him. His allusions to it are constant. He returned to England in January, 1803, with formed tastes and predilections, very few of which he afterwards modified, much less forsook.

In the essay on the 'Portrait of an English Lady,' by Vandyke, he says:—

"I have in this essay mentioned one or two of the portraits in the Louvre that I like best. The two landscapes which I should most covet, are the one with a rainbow, by Rubens, and the Adam and Eve in Paradise, by Poussin. . . . . I should be contented with these four or five pictures, the Lady, by Vandyke, the Titian

[his Mistress], the Presentation to the Temple, the Rubens, and the Poussin, or even with faithful copies of them, added to the two which I have of a young Neapolitan nobleman and the Hippolito de Medici; and which, when I look at them, recall other times and the feelings with which they were done. . . . . .

"My taste in pictures is, I believe, very different from that of rich and princely collectors. I would not give twopence for the whole gallery at Fonthill. I should like to have a few pictures hung round the room, that speak to me with well-known looks, that touch some string of memory—not a number of varnished, smooth, glittering gewgaws. The taste of the great in pictures is singular, but not unaccountable. The King is said to prefer the Dutch to the Italian school of painting. . . . . ."

He also returned home with some very decided impressions of the French character, which accompanied him through life.

He says:—"You see a Frenchman in the Louvre copying the finest pictures, standing on one leg, with his hat on; or after copying a Raphael, thinking David much finer, more truly one of themselves, more a combination of the Greek sculptor and the French posture-master. Even if a French artist fails, he is not disconcerted; there is something else he excels in: if he cannot paint, he can dance! If an Englishman, God save the mark! fails in anything, he thinks he can do nothing. Enraged at the mention of his ability to do anything else, and at any consolation offered him, he

banishes all other thought but of his disappointment, and discarding hope from his breast, neither eats nor sleeps (it is well if he does not cut his throat), will not attend to any other thing in which he before took an interest and pride, and is in despair till he recovers his good opinion of himself in the point in which he has been disgraced; though, from his very anxiety and disorder of mind, he is incapacitated from applying to the only means of doing so, as much as if he were drunk with liquor instead of pride and passion. The character I have here drawn of an Englishman I am clear about, for it is the character of myself, and, I am sorry to add, no exaggerated one. As my object is to paint the varieties of human nature, and, as I can have it best from myself, I will confess a weakness. I lately tried to copy a Titian (after many years' want of practice), in order to give a friend in England some idea of the picture. I floundered on for several days, but failed, as might be expected. My sky became overcast. Everything seemed of the colour of the paint I used. Nature was one great daub. I had no feeling left but a sense of want of power, and of an abortive struggle to do what I could not do. I was ashamed of being seen to look at the picture with admiration, as if I had no right to do so. I was ashamed even to have written or spoken about the picture or about art at all: it seemed a piece of presumption and affectation in me, whose whole notions and refinements on the subject ended in an inexcusable daub. Why did I think of attempting such a thing heedlessly, of exposing my presumption

and incapacity? It was blotting from my memory, covering with a dark veil all that I remembered of those pictures formerly, my hopes when young, my regrets since; it was wresting from me one of the consolations of my life and of my declining years. I was even afraid to walk out by the barrier of Neuilly, or to recall to memory that I had ever seen the picture; all was turned to bitterness and gall: to feel anything but a sense of my own helplessness and absurdity seemed a want of sincerity, a mockery, and a piece of injustice. The only comfort I had was in the excess of pain I felt: this was at least some distinction. I was not insensible on that side. No Frenchman, I thought, would regret the not copying a Titian so much as I did, or so far show the same value for it. Besides, I had copied this identical picture very well formerly. If ever I got out of this scrape, I had received a lesson, at least, not to run the same risk of gratuitous vexation again, or even to attempt what was uncertain and unnecessary.

"A French gentleman formerly asked me what I thought of a landscape in their Exhibition. I said I thought it too clear. He made answer that he should have conceived that to be impossible. I replied, that what I meant was, that the parts of the several objects were made out with too nearly equal distinctness all over the picture; that the leaves of the trees in shadow were as distinct as those in light, the branches of trees at a distance as plain as of those near. The perspective arose only from the diminution of objects, and there was no interposition of air. I said one could

not see the leaves of a tree a mile off; but this, I added, appertained to a question in metaphysics. He shook his head, thinking that a young Englishman could know as little of abstruse philosophy as of fine art, and no more was said. I owe to this gentleman (whose name was Merrimee,* and who I understand is still living) a grateful sense of many friendly attentions and many useful suggestions, and I take this opportunity of acknowledging my obligations.

"I myself have heard Charles Fox engaged in familiar conversation. It was in the Louvre. He was describing the pictures to two persons that were with him. He spoke rapidly, but very unaffectedly. I remember his saying—'All these blues and greens and reds are the Guercinos; you may know them by the colours.' He set Opie right as to Domenichino's Saint Jerome. 'You will find,' he said, 'though you may not be struck with it at first, that there is a great deal of truth and good sense in that picture.'

"I remember being once driven by a shower of rain into a picture-dealer's shop in Oxford Street, where there stood on the floor a copy of Gainsborough's Shepherd boy, with the thunder-storm coming on. What a truth and beauty were there! He stands with his hands clasped, looking up with a mixture of timidity and resignation, eyeing a magpie chattering over his head, while the wind is rustling in the branches. It was like a vision breathed on the canvas. [From that day dated Mr. Hazlitt's fondness for Gainsborough.]

* See *ante*, pp. 83, 87, 89.

"I confess I never liked W[estal]l. It was one of the errors of my youth that I did not think him equal to Raphael and Rubens united, as Payne Knight contended; and I have fought many a battle with numbers (if not odds) against me on that point."

Mr. Hazlitt thought it was no satisfaction, but rather a double annoyance, to witness a change of opinion on this subject. It was no consolation to him, he said, that an individual was overrated by the folly of the public formerly, and that he suffered from their injustice and fickleness at present. He instanced the case of the Rev. Edward Irving, who had risen into public favour so suddenly, and then fallen from it with equal suddenness.

"I never, in the whole course of my life, heard one artist speak in hearty praise of another. . . . I once knew a very remarkable instance of this. A friend of mine had written a criticism of an exhibition. In this were mentioned, in terms of the highest praise, the works of two brothers; sufficiently so, indeed, to have satisfied, one would have thought, the most insatiate. I was going down into the country to the place where these two brothers lived, and I was asked to be the bearer of the work in which the critique appeared. I was so, and sent a copy to each of them.

"Some days afterwards I called on one of them, who began to speak of the review of his pictures. He expressed some thanks for what was said of them, but complained that the writer of it had fallen into a very common error—under which he had often suffered—the

confounding, namely, his pictures with his brother's. 'Now, my dear sir,' continued he, 'what is said of me is all very well; but here,' turning to the high-wrought panegyric on his brother, 'this is all in allusion to my style; this is all in reference to my pictures; this is all meant for me!' I could hardly help exclaiming before the man's face."

CHAPTER VII.

1803–1805.

The young painter in the provinces—Tour in Lancashire, Yorkshire, &c.—Autobiographical recollections — Second appearance in print.

His next step was to undertake a professional tour in the north of England, and it appears that he was not unsuccessful in obtaining sitters. But my notes go no farther than a bare record of his having painted the Rev. Dr. Shepherd of Gateacre, the poet Wordsworth,* and Coleridge's son Hartley, whom his family nicknamed *Pi-Po*.

To this Lancashire tour belongs, in order of time, I surmise, his visit to Daniel Stringer, the artist, at Knutsford.

"I saw some spirited sketches," he says. "One of the blacksmith swallowing the tailor's news, from Shake-

* Wordsworth, in a letter to my father of May 23, 1831, says of my grandfather: "I cannot recollect that I ever saw him but once since the year 1803 or 1804, when he passed some time in this neighbourhood. He was then practising portrait-painting, with professional views. At his desire, I sat to him, but as he did not satisfy himself or my friends, the unfinished work was destroyed."—W. C. H.

speare, in an unfinished state; and a capital female figure by Cignani. All his skill and love of art had, I found, been sacrificed to his delight in Cheshire ale and the company of country squires. Tom Kershaw of Manchester used to say that he would rather have been Dan Stringer than Sir Joshua Reynolds at twenty years of age."

I gather, however, that he also visited the Railtons of Liverpool in his way, even if he did not paint some of them. It was at their house that he stayed a short time in 1790, if I am not mistaken; and more lately, on his going abroad, Mr. Railton, who seems to have been on friendly terms with Mr. Hazlitt of Wem, intrusted to him one or two commissions. Of these he speaks in his correspondence. In the 'Conversations of Northcote,' with which Northcote had next to nothing to do, he characterizes Railton as "a very excellent man, and a good patriot." His descendants are still at Liverpool, or were very lately.

Whatever may have been his opportunities of seeing the Railtons, or of judging of their characters, one point is clear, that he fell in love with one of the daughters; and it was the earliest adventure of this description which he had yet met with, unless more implicit faith than I have supposed is to be put in an allegation of De Quincey's—of which more hereafter. He was now five-and-twenty, and the young lady was of about the same age. She was possessed of considerable personal attractions, with very dangerous dark eyes. My grandfather was strongly smitten, and I have understood that

the attachment was not wholly on one side. Something might have come of the affair, had the family approved of the alliance; but they did not view with a very favourable eye the prospect of a connexion with a struggling artist, and relations were broken off. I conceive that it must have been while the courtship was still in progress, that Miss Railton sat to John Hazlitt for that beautiful miniature on ivory of her, which is now for the first time engraved; and the presumption is, that, upon the discouragement of my grandfather's attentions by the parents, the likeness was returned.

His personal recollections of this period of his life are more likely to interest than what has gone immediately before. But as the incident I have just reported is a new one in his history, I may be pardoned for having introduced it without anything approaching to sufficient *data* for making a connected and intelligible narrative of it.

An interesting little love adventure, which he met with down at the Lakes, while he was upon his first experimental trip in search of sitters, is so distinctly alluded to in a letter from Lamb to Wordsworth, that I shall just give what Lamb says about it; premising that Patmore had heard in his time of some story of my grandfather being struck by the charms of a village beauty in Wordsworth's neighbourhood, and of having narrowly escaped being ducked by the swains for his ill-appreciated attentions.

Wordsworth had evidently described the whole affair in a letter to Lamb. The latter writes back to him:—

"The 'scapes' of the great god Pan, who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since [1803], and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains, afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water-nymphs pulling for him. He would have been another Hylas—W. Hylas. In a mad letter which Capel Lofft wrote to M[onthly] M[agazine] Phillips (now Sir Richard), I remember his noticing a metaphysical article of Pan, signed H., and adding, 'I take your correspondent to be the same with Hylas.'"

It seems that "little Mr. De Quincey" (Southey wished "he was not so little, and would not always forget his greatcoat") got hold of a report that Mr. H. was also smitten by Miss Wordsworth, the poet's sister Dorothy. It was, if true, like some of his others, a Buncle-ish passion, and came to nothing. W. H. was at this time twenty, and Dorothy Wordsworth was twenty-seven. I confess that I place very little reliance on the statement; but as I find it, so I set it down.

Again I become only a transcriber. He says:—

"I remember well being introduced to a patron of art and rising merit at a little distance from Liverpool, and was received with every mark of attention and politeness, till the conversation turning on Italian literature, our host remarked that there was nothing in the English language corresponding to the severity of the Italian ode, except, perhaps, Dryden's 'Alexander's Feast,' and Pope's 'St. Cecilia!' I could no longer contain my desire to display my smattering in criticism, and began to maintain that Pope's 'Ode' was, as

it appeared to me, far from an example of severity in writing. I soon perceived what I had done. . . . .

"I once lived on coffee (as an experiment) for a fortnight together, while I was finishing the copy of a half-length portrait of a Manchester manufacturer, who died worth a plum. I rather slurred over the coat, which was a reddish brown, 'of formal cut,' to receive my five guineas, with which I went to market myself, and dined on sausages and mashed potatoes, and while they were getting ready, and I could hear them hissing in the pan, read a volume of 'Gil Blas,' containing the account of the fair Aurora. This was in the days of my youth. Gentle reader, do not smile! Neither Monsieur de Véry, nor Louis XVIII., over an oyster-pâté, nor Apicius himself, ever understood the meaning of the word *luxury* better than I did at that moment!

"I have heard an anecdote connected with the reputation of Gainsborough's pictures, which rests on pretty good authority. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the Academy dinners, speaking of Gainsborough, said to a friend, 'He is undoubtedly the best English landscape-painter.' 'No,' said Wilson, who overheard the conversation, 'he is not the best landscape-painter, but he is the best portrait-painter in England.'

"The first head I ever tried to paint was an old woman's, with the upper part of the face shaded by her bonnet, and I certainly laboured [at] it with great perseverance. It took me numberless sittings to do it. I have it by me still [1821], and sometimes look at it with surprise, to think how much pains were thrown

away to little purpose; yet not altogether in vain, if it taught me to see good in everything, and to know that there is nothing vulgar in nature seen with the eye of science or of true art. . . . I spared no pains to do my best. If art was long, I thought that life was so too at that moment. I got in the general effect the first day, and pleased and surprised enough I was at my success. The rest was a work of time—of weeks and months (if need were) of patient toil and careful finishing. I had seen an old head by Rembrandt at Burleigh House; and if I could produce a head at all like Rembrandt in a year, it would be glory and felicity, and wealth and fame enough for me. The head I had seen at Burleigh was an exact and wonderful facsimile of nature, and I resolved to make mine (as nearly as I could) an exact facsimile of nature. . . . The picture was never finished, and I might have gone on with it to the present hour.*

"Statuary does not affect me like painting. I am not, I allow, a fair judge, having paid a great deal more attention to the one than to the other. Nor did I ever think of the first as a profession; and it is that perhaps which adds the sting to our love of excellence, the hope of attaining it ourselves in any particular walk. . . . .

* The person who sat to him for this picture (nearly destroyed by megilp) was an old cottager he met near Manchester. She died very soon after her likeness was taken. The picture used for a long time to hang in Mr. John Hunt's room, when he was in Coldbath Fields Prison, and Mr. Hazlitt would go there and gaze at it fondly. It is now in the hands of the family.

One reason, however, why I prefer painting to sculpture is, that painting is more like nature. It gives one an entire and satisfactory view of an object at a particular moment of time, which sculpture never does. It is not the same in reality, I grant; but it is the same in appearance, which is all we are concerned with."

Among other essays in painting which he made upon commission, was a half-length of Sir Joshua Reynolds, with which he was put out of conceit by witnessing a performance of Indian jugglers; and a head of Lear, which, from all that I can learn, was quite an early experiment. It is a sketch of the head and shoulders of the old mad king, with his white hair waving in the wind, very characteristic and Shakespearian.

He was very impatient with himself, and when he could not produce the effect he desired, he has been known to cut the canvas into ribbons. The grand object of his ambition as an artist was the illustration of the subject of Jacob's Ladder; and here he never, in his own estimation, so much as approached success.

In 1804 he commenced a portrait of his father, who was now beginning to get on in years. He shall speak for himself:—

"One of my first attempts was a picture of my father, who was then in a green old age, with strongly marked features, and scarred with the small-pox. I drew it with a broad light crossing the face, looking down, with spectacles on, reading. The book was 'Shaftesbury's Characteristics,' in a fine old binding, with Gribelin's etchings. My father would as lieve it had been any

other book; but for him to read was to be content,—was 'riches priceless.' The sketch promised well; and I set to work to finish it, determined to spare no time nor pains. . . . He had some pride in the artist, though he would rather I should have written a sermon than have painted like Rembrandt or like Raphael. Those winter days, with the gleams of sunshine coming through the chapel-windows, and cheered by the notes of the robin-redbreast in our garden [at Wem]. . . . were among the happiest of my life. I used regularly to set my work in the chair, to look at it through the long evenings; and many a time did I return to take leave of it before I could go to bed at night. I remember sending it with a throbbing heart to the Exhibition, and seeing it hung up there by the side of the Honourable Mr. Skeffington (now Sir George). . . . I think, but I'm not sure, that I finished this portrait (or another afterwards) on the same day that the news of the battle of Austerlitz came. I walked out in the afternoon; and as I returned, saw the sun set over a poor man's cottage, with other thoughts and feelings than I shall ever have again.*

"I am sure, my father had as little vanity for the art as most persons; yet when he had sat to me a few times . . . . he grew evidently uneasy when it was a fine day, that is, when the sun shone into the room, so that we could not paint; and when it became

* 'On the Pleasures of Painting.' The picture referred to, a very fine one, quite in the Rembrandt style, is still in possession of the family.

cloudy, began to bustle about, and ask me if I was not getting ready. . . . Between my father's love of sitting and mine of painting, we hit upon a tolerable likeness at last; but the picture is cracked and gone, and *megilp* (the bane of the English school) has destroyed as fine an old Nonconformist head as one could hope to see in these degenerate times."

The operation of the megilp has not been quite so fatal in the present instance as the painter's words might leave us to conclude. The picture is still in existence, and although the deleterious element in the old varnish has undoubtedly damaged it to some slight extent, it is in very fair preservation at this moment, after upwards of sixty years' exposure to all atmospheric influences. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1806, when perhaps the artist had made up his mind to let it go, and to give no more last touches.

It was in 1804, also, that he finished, after eight years' labour, his, 'Essay on the Principles of Human Actions,' which he had begun *proprio motu*, and persevered in at the instigation of Coleridge, who found him at work upon it in 1798. He had great difficulty in procuring a publisher for a book so ill-calculated to meet with popular demand. His brother's friends, however, lent him a helping hand here; and he obtained, through one of them, an introduction to Mr. Johnson, of St. Paul's Churchyard, who undertook the speculation, and brought out the essay in 1805, in an octavo volume of 263 pages.

The sale was slow and small, and I do not believe that the author ever received a penny from it The pleasure of having written it was his only, as it was his greatest, reward. Yet not his only reward, neither; for he heard it mentioned with commendation and respect by persons whose opinion he could not but value. Among his admirers was Mr. Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger. The tradition in the family (true or untrue) is that Scarlett communicated his favourable estimate of the treatise to my grandfather; and that the latter might have reaped, from the connexion thus opened, considerable advantage and eventual emolument, if the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt had not inculcated upon his son the idea that his new correspondent had sinister designs upon his liberty of action.

Upon this book, which never was, and never could be popular, he was pleased to take his stand.

"The only thing I ever piqued myself upon was the writing the 'Essay on the Principles of Human Actions,'" he assures us repeatedly.

It had the strongest possible hold on his affection; and when it was printed, he set about making notes in his own copy, adding, altering, and taking away, with a distinct view to a new edition, which was thirty years making its way to the public.

He had abandoned now all expectation of succeeding as an artist; but it was while he was in London, in 1805, as I have some reason to think, that he painted the portrait of Lamb in the costume of a Venetian Senator, which has this double interest, that is, the likeness of so

dear and old a friend, and that it was the last time that he took the pencil in hand.* The picture represents Lamb as he was about thirty, and it is by far the most pleasing and characteristic resemblance we possess of him as a comparatively young man. The costume was the painter's whim, and must be said to detract from the effect of the whole.

* Perhaps with the exception of a copy of Titian, which he attempted to make for a friend later in life; but this was never completed.

CHAPTER VIII.

1803–5.

New acquaintances—The Stoddarts and the Lambs.

THE early and successful establishment of John Hazlitt in London as the member of a liberal profession was of considerable value to his brother, when it became a question, as it really did about 1803, of the latter coming up to town, and endeavouring to support himself by his own exertions.

His father was getting old, and had never been, nor was he ever likely to be, a rich man. The modest income which his duties brought him was sufficient for his own purposes, and his family was fortunately small. John had long since been in the way of earning his own livelihood, and only Peggy and William were at home.

I do not find that William fixed his abode in London permanently so early as 1803, however; but he was beginning to spend part of his time in town with his brother, living otherwise at Wem, as before.

It was during his stays at 12, Rathbone Place, that he made the acquaintance of two families, whose subsequent intimacy was destined to exercise a very large

share of influence on his future career. These were the Stoddarts and the Lambs.

Dr. Stoddart and his sister Sarah were the only children of Lieutenant John Stoddart, R. N., a retired and disappointed navy man, who had inherited or acquired (I hardly know which) a small property near Salisbury, at a village called Winterslow. Lieutenant Stoddart lived at Salisbury upon his half-pay and the proceeds of his independence, and with him his daughter. His son had gone up to London, and become a student of the civil law. He and John Hazlitt were extreme Liberals in politics; and the late Dr. Charles Richardson used to say that he could remember Stoddart when he went all lengths in Radicalism, and wore the Phrygian cap. John Hazlitt never swerved from his faith, but Dr. Stoddart afterwards did.

In 1803 Dr. Stoddart was appointed, by the influence of Sir William Scott, king's advocate at Malta, and upon his departure to that island his sister accompanied him on a visit.

Dr. Stoddart, through his friend John Hazlitt, knew the Lambs some time before the receipt of the Maltese appointment—*how much* before I have no present means of discovering.* The correspondence of Dr. Stoddart, if any such ever took place, with Charles and Mary Lamb, has not apparently been preserved; and it is only from the accidental existence of a series of letters,

* He was intimate, later on, with Dr. Dibdin, the bibliographer. He, Dibdin, and the late Sir Benjamin Brodie, were members of a club called *The Lunatics*.

written between the years 1803 and 1808, by Mary Lamb to Miss Stoddart, that we glean the truth as to the relations at this period between the two families, and its origin.

It is to be regretted that the correspondence, as it now stands, pushes us, as it were, *in medias res*, and does not admit us to a knowledge of the sources of that intimacy which had sprung up between the sister of Dr. Stoddart and the sister of Lamb, considerably before the autumn of the year in which the Doctor sailed to take possession of his office. The first which I shall give will afford a glimpse of a new fact in William Hazlitt's history.

[21st September, 1803.]

"My dear Sarah,

"I returned home from my visit yesterday, and was much pleased to find your letter, for I have been very anxious to hear how you are going on. I could hardly help expecting to see you when I came in; yet, though I should have rejoiced to have seen your merry face again, I believe it was better as it was, upon the whole—and, all things considered, it is certainly better you should go to Malta. The terms you are upon with your lover* does (as you say it will) appear wondrous strange to me; however, as I cannot enter into your feelings, I certainly can have nothing to say to it, only that I sincerely wish you happy in your own way, however odd that way may appear to me to be. I would begin now to advise you to drop all correspondence with

* A Mr. Turner, to whom Miss Stoddart was at this stage engaged.

William;* but as I said before, as I cannot enter into your feelings and views of things, your ways not being my ways, why should I tell you what I would do in your situation? So, child, take thy own ways, and God prosper thee in them!

"One thing my advising spirit must say—use as little *Secrecy* as possible, and as much as possible make a friend of your sister-in-law.† You know I was not struck with her at first sight, but upon your account I have watched and marked her very attentively; and while she was eating a bit of cold mutton in our kitchen, we had a serious conversation. From the frankness of her manner I am convinced she is a person I could make a friend of: why should not you? We talked freely about you; she seems to have a just notion of your character, and will be fond of you, if you will let her. . . . .

"My aunt and my mother were wholly unlike you and your sister, yet in some degree theirs is the secret history I believe of all sisters-in-law. . . . When you leave your mother, and say if you never shall see her again you shall feel no remorse; and when you make a *Jewish* bargain with your *lover*, all this gives me no offence, because it is your nature and your temper, and I do not expect or want you to be otherwise than you are. I love you for the good that is in you, and look for no change. . . . .

* After great hesitation, and a most careful comparison of dates and expressions in letters, I have arrived at the firm belief that *William* was my grandfather, and that Miss Stoddart was in correspondence with him thus early.

† Mrs., afterwards Lady Stoddart. She was Isabella, daughter of the Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff, Bart.

"*Secrecy*, though you appear all frankness, is certainly a grand failing of yours; it is likewise your brother's, and therefore a family failing. By secrecy, I mean you both want the habit of telling each other at the moment everything that happens, where you go, and what you do—that free communication of letters and opinions, just as they arrive, as Charles and I do, and which is after all the only groundwork of friendship. . . . . Begin, for God's sake [from the] first, and tell her everything that passes: at first she may hear you with indifference, but in time this will gain her affection and confidence. Show her all your letters (no matter if she does not show hers); it is a pleasant thing for a friend to put into one's hand a letter just fresh from the post. I would even say, begin with showing her this, but that it is written freely and loosely, and some apology ought to be made for it. . . . .

"God bless you, and grant you may preserve your integrity, and remain unmarried and penniless, and make William a good and a happy wife.

"Your affectionate friend,

"M. LAMB.

"Charles is very unwell, and my head aches. He sends his love: mine, with my best wishes, to your brother and sister.

"I hope I shall get another letter from you.

"Wednesday 21st September, 1803.

[Endorsed.]

"Miss Stoddart, Dr. Stoddart's, Ryde, Isle of Wight.

"To be left at the Post-Office."

None of Miss Stoddart's letters to Miss Lamb has survived to my knowledge; and the unsettled and unhappy state of affairs in the Lamb family may possibly account for their disappearance. But here, in September, 1803, is Miss Stoddart, with her brother and her sister-in-law, in the Isle of Wight, preparatorily to their going to Malta together: Miss Stoddart engaged to a lover (Mr. Turner), but of two minds, whether she will have him—her brother's choice as much as her own—or a certain W. H., who already holds letters of hers, and whose acquaintance she has formed at the Doctor's friends in Rathbone Place!

The next letter from Miss Lamb found her fair correspondent established at Malta. It was the year 1804, and Dr. Stoddart was expecting another visitor, not a lady this time, but a gentleman, Samuel Taylor Coleridge by name:—

[Early in 1804.]

"My dearest Sarah,

"We rejoiced with exceeding great joy to hear of your safe arrival. I hope your brother will return home, in a very few years, a very rich man. . . . I want you to say a great deal about yourself. *Are you happy? and do you not repent going out?* . . . Rickman* wants to know if you are going to be married yet. Satisfy him in that little particular when you write. . . . .

* John Rickman, Esq., Lamb's friend. His name will occur again.

"God bless you, and send you all manner of comforts and happinesses.

"Your affectionate friend,

"MARY LAMB."

Miss Stoddart communicated, upon Coleridge's arrival in the island, the acceptable intelligence to the Lambs in a letter, which Miss Lamb at once replied to. She says:—

"Your letters, my dear Sarah, are to me very, very precious ones. They are the kindest, best, most natural ones, I ever received. The letters we received a few days after from your brother were far less welcome ones. . . . I am sorry to find your brother is not so successful as he at first expected to be; and yet I am almost tempted to wish his ill fortune may send him over to us again. . . . . I cannot condole with you very sincerely upon your little failure in the fortune-making way. If you regret it, so do I. But I hope to see you a comfortable English wife, and the forsaken, forgotten William, of English partridge memory, I have still a hankering after. . . . I feel that I have too lightly passed over the interesting account you sent me of your late disappointment. It was not because I did not feel and completely enter into the affair with you. You surprise and please me with the frank and generous way in which you deal with your lovers, taking a refusal from their so prudential hearts with a better grace and more good humour than other women accept a suitor's service. Continue this open

artless conduct, and I trust you will at last find some man who has sense enough to know you are well worth risking a probable life of poverty for. I shall yet live to see you a poor, but happy English wife."

I can do no more than extract such passages as more or less immediately illustrate these memoirs; but there is a great deal in the correspondence of more general interest, if space could be found for it.

Miss Stoddart returned home as she had gone, unmarried. The next letter was directed to her at Salisbury; like the last, it is undated, but it was most probably written in the commencement of September, 1805:—

"My dear Sarah,

"Certainly you are the best letter-writer (besides writing the best hand) in the world. I have just been reading over again your two long letters, and I perceive they make me very envious.

"All I can gather from your clear, and I have no doubt faithful history of Maltese politics, is that the good Doctor, though a firm friend, an excellent fancier of brooches, a good husband, an upright advocate, and in short all that they say upon tombstones—for I do not recollect that they celebrate any fraternal virtues there—yet is he but a moody brother. That your sister-in-law is pretty much like what all sisters-in-law have been since the first happy invention of the happy marriage state . . . and that you, my dear Sarah, have proved yourself as unfit to flourish in a little proud garrison

town as I did shrewdly suspect you were before you went there.

"If I possibly can, I will prevail upon Charles to write to your brother by the conveyance you mention; but he is so unwell, I almost fear the fortnight will slip away before I can get him in the right vein. . . . .

"I rejoice to hear of your mother's amendment: when you can leave her with any satisfaction to yourself, which, as her sister, I think I understand by your letters, is with her, I hope you may soon be able to do, let me know upon what plan you mean to come to town. Your brother proposed your being six months in town and six with your mother, but he did not then know of your poor mother's illness. By his desire I inquired for a respectable family for you to board with, and from Captain Burney* I heard of one I thought would suit you at that time. He [Dr. S.] particularly desired I would not think of your being with us; not thinking, I conjecture, the house of a single man *respectable* enough. Your brother gave me most unlimited orders to domineer over you, to be the inspector of all your actions, and to direct and govern you with a stern voice and a high hand; to be, in short, a very elder brother over you. Does not the hearing of this, my meek pupil, make you long to come to London? . . . . . But to speak seriously, I mean when we mean [meet] that we will lay our heads together, and consult and contrive the best way of making the best girl in the world the

* Captain, afterwards Admiral, James Burney, Southey's *Capitaneus*. His name will recur often enough.

fine lady her brother wishes to see her; and believe me, Sarah, it is not so difficult a matter as one is sometimes apt to imagine. . . . .

"Has the partridge season opened any communication between you and William? As I allow you to be imprudent till I see you, I shall expect to hear you have invited him to taste his own birds. Have you scratched him out of your will yet? . . . . .

"I do long to see you. God bless and comfort you.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Miss Stoddart, Salisbury."

The next letter was written "after a very feverish night:" the writer had just returned from "banishment." There is no date, but there is sufficient to show that it was sent very late in October, 1805, and perhaps not till the commencement of November. It appears from it that she had been trying to write for some time, but at last had let Charles write for her (his letter, if sent, is lost); and then, after all, that she made up her mind to let the few lines she had written go. "I am resolved," she says, "now, however few lines I write, this shall go, for I know, my kind friend, you will like once more to see my own handwriting." The sheet is filled for the most part with general news, with nothing specially pertinent, but there is this noteworthy passage: "I want to know if you have seen William, and if there is any prospect in future there. All you said in your letter from Portsmouth that related to him was burnt

so in the fumigating,* that we could only make out that it was unfavourable, but not the particulars. Tell us again how you go on, and if you have seen him. I conceit affairs will somehow be made up between you at last."

A few days later Miss Lamb put pen to paper again. She felt more composed and collected.

[9th November, 1805.]

"My dear Sarah,

"After a very feverish night I writ a letter to you, and I have been distressed about it ever since. In the first place I have thought I treated too lightly your differences with your brother—which I freely enter into, and feel for, but I rather wished to defer saying much about [them] till we meet. But that which gives me most concern is the way in which I talked about your mother's illness, and which I have since feared you might construe into my having a doubt of your showing her proper attention without my impertinent interference. . . . . .

"Your kind heart will, I know, even if you have been a little displeased, forgive me, when I assure you my spirits have been so much hurt by my last illness, that at times I hardly know what I do. I do not mean to alarm you about myself, or to plead an excuse, but I am very much otherwise than you have always known me.

"Write immediately, my dear Sarah, but do not notice this letter, nor do not mention anything I said relative to your poor mother. Your handwriting will

* For disinfecting purposes.

convince me you are friends with me; and if Charles, who must see my letter, was to know I had first written foolishly, and then fretted about the event of my folly, he would both ways be angry with me.

"I would desire you to direct to me at home, but your hand is so well known to Charles, that that would not do. . . .

"Pray write directly, and believe me, ever

"Your affectionate friend,

"M. LAMB.

"*Nov.* 14. I have kept this by me till to-day, hoping every day to hear from you. If you found the seal a clumsy one, it is because I opened the wafer. . . . I do not mean to continue a secret correspondence, but you must oblige me with this one letter. In future I will always show my letters before they go, which will be a proper check upon my wayward pen.

"Miss Stoddart, Salisbury."

More than enough has been adduced to show that in 1803 and the following years the connection between the Lambs and the Stoddarts was most intimate; and that through John Hazlitt a tie, which was promising to get stronger, had arisen between Dr. Stoddart's sister and my grandfather. At the same time that Miss Lamb was writing letters to "my dear Sarah" at Salisbury, Lamb himself was writing letters to "William" at Wem.

It is nearly as bad with the one as with the other. I

written between the years 1803 and 1808, by Mary Lamb to Miss Stoddart, that we glean the truth as to the relations at this period between the two families, and its origin.

It is to be regretted that the correspondence, as it now stands, pushes us, as it were, *in medias res*, and does not admit us to a knowledge of the sources of that intimacy which had sprung up between the sister of Dr. Stoddart and the sister of Lamb, considerably before the autumn of the year in which the Doctor sailed to take possession of his office. The first which I shall give will afford a glimpse of a new fact in William Hazlitt's history.

[21st September, 1803.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I returned home from my visit yesterday, and was much pleased to find your letter, for I have been very anxious to hear how you are going on. I could hardly help expecting to see you when I came in; yet, though I should have rejoiced to have seen your merry face again, I believe it was better as it was, upon the whole—and, all things considered, it is certainly better you should go to Malta. The terms you are upon with your lover* does (as you say it will) appear wondrous strange to me; however, as I cannot enter into your feelings, I certainly can have nothing to say to it, only that I sincerely wish you happy in your own way, however odd that way may appear to me to be. I would begin now to advise you to drop all correspondence with

* A Mr. Turner, to whom Miss Stoddart was at this stage engaged.

William;* but as I said before, as I cannot enter into your feelings and views of things, your ways not being my ways, why should I tell you what I would do in your situation? So, child, take thy own ways, and God prosper thee in them!

"One thing my advising spirit must say—use as little *Secrecy* as possible, and as much as possible make a friend of your sister-in-law.† You know I was not struck with her at first sight, but upon your account I have watched and marked her very attentively; and while she was eating a bit of cold mutton in our kitchen, we had a serious conversation. From the frankness of her manner I am convinced she is a person I could make a friend of: why should not you? We talked freely about you; she seems to have a just notion of your character, and will be fond of you, if you will let her. . . . .

"My aunt and my mother were wholly unlike you and your sister, yet in some degree theirs is the secret history I believe of all sisters-in-law. . . . When you leave your mother, and say if you never shall see her again you shall feel no remorse; and when you make a *Jewish* bargain with your *lover*, all this gives me no offence, because it is your nature and your temper, and I do not expect or want you to be otherwise than you are. I love you for the good that is in you, and look for no change. . . . .

* After great hesitation, and a most careful comparison of dates and expressions in letters, I have arrived at the firm belief that *William* was my grandfather, and that Miss Stoddart was in correspondence with him thus early.

† Mrs., afterwards Lady Stoddart. She was Isabella, daughter of the Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff, Bart.

"*Secrecy*, though you appear all frankness, is certainly a grand failing of yours; it is likewise your brother's, and therefore a family failing. By secrecy, I mean you both want the habit of telling each other at the moment everything that happens, where you go, and what you do—that free communication of letters and opinions, just as they arrive, as Charles and I do, and which is after all the only groundwork of friendship. . . . . Begin, for God's sake [from the] first, and tell her everything that passes: at first she may hear you with indifference, but in time this will gain her affection and confidence. Show her all your letters (no matter if she does not show hers); it is a pleasant thing for a friend to put into one's hand a letter just fresh from the post. I would even say, begin with showing her this, but that it is written freely and loosely, and some apology ought to be made for it. . . . .

"God bless you, and grant you may preserve your integrity, and remain unmarried and penniless, and make William a good and a happy wife.

"Your affectionate friend,

"M. LAMB.

"Charles is very unwell, and my head aches. He sends his love: mine, with my best wishes, to your brother and sister.

"I hope I shall get another letter from you.

"Wednesday 21st September, 1803.

[Endorsed.]

"Miss Stoddart, Dr. Stoddart's, Ryde, Isle of Wight.

"To be left at the Post-Office."

None of Miss Stoddart's letters to Miss Lamb has survived to my knowledge; and the unsettled and unhappy state of affairs in the Lamb family may possibly account for their disappearance. But here, in September, 1803, is Miss Stoddart, with her brother and her sister-in-law, in the Isle of Wight, preparatorily to their going to Malta together: Miss Stoddart engaged to a lover (Mr. Turner), but of two minds, whether she will have him—her brother's choice as much as her own—or a certain W. H., who already holds letters of hers, and whose acquaintance she has formed at the Doctor's friends in Rathbone Place!

The next letter from Miss Lamb found her fair correspondent established at Malta. It was the year 1804, and Dr. Stoddart was expecting another visitor, not a lady this time, but a gentleman, Samuel Taylor Coleridge by name:—

[Early in 1804.]

"My dearest Sarah,

"We rejoiced with exceeding great joy to hear of your safe arrival. I hope your brother will return home, in a very few years, a very rich man. . . . I want you to say a great deal about yourself. *Are you happy? and do you not repent going out?* . . . Rickman* wants to know if you are going to be married yet. Satisfy him in that little particular when you write. . . . .

* John Rickman, Esq., Lamb's friend. His name will occur again.

"God bless you, and send you all manner of comforts and happinesses.

"Your affectionate friend,

"MARY LAMB."

Miss Stoddart communicated, upon Coleridge's arrival in the island, the acceptable intelligence to the Lambs in a letter, which Miss Lamb at once replied to. She says:—

"Your letters, my dear Sarah, are to me very, very precious ones. They are the kindest, best, most natural ones, I ever received. The letters we received a few days after from your brother were far less welcome ones. . . . I am sorry to find your brother is not so successful as he at first expected to be; and yet I am almost tempted to wish his ill fortune may send him over to us again. . . . . I cannot condole with you very sincerely upon your little failure in the fortune-making way. If you regret it, so do I. But I hope to see you a comfortable English wife, and the forsaken, forgotten William, of English partridge memory, I have still a hankering after. . . . I feel that I have too lightly passed over the interesting account you sent me of your late disappointment. It was not because I did not feel and completely enter into the affair with you. You surprise and please me with the frank and generous way in which you deal with your lovers, taking a refusal from their so prudential hearts with a better grace and more good humour than other women accept a suitor's service. Continue this open

artless conduct, and I trust you will at last find some man who has sense enough to know you are well worth risking a probable life of poverty for. I shall yet live to see you a poor, but happy English wife."

I can do no more than extract such passages as more or less immediately illustrate these memoirs; but there is a great deal in the correspondence of more general interest, if space could be found for it.

Miss Stoddart returned home as she had gone, unmarried. The next letter was directed to her at Salisbury; like the last, it is undated, but it was most probably written in the commencement of September, 1805:—

"My dear Sarah,

"Certainly you are the best letter-writer (besides writing the best hand) in the world. I have just been reading over again your two long letters, and I perceive they make me very envious.

"All I can gather from your clear, and I have no doubt faithful history of Maltese politics, is that the good Doctor, though a firm friend, an excellent fancier of brooches, a good husband, an upright advocate, and in short all that they say upon tombstones—for I do not recollect that they celebrate any fraternal virtues there—yet is he but a moody brother. That your sister-in-law is pretty much like what all sisters-in-law have been since the first happy invention of the happy marriage state . . . and that you, my dear Sarah, have proved yourself as unfit to flourish in a little proud garrison

came to London, and stayed with the Lambs. But William and she did not meet, and perhaps Mr. Turner or Mr. White stood in the way. The next letter of news and advice was sent after her, when she had returned to Winterslow.

[February 17-22, 1806.]

"My dear Sarah,

". . . . I am going to make a sort of promise to myself and to you, that I will write you kind of journal-like letters of the daily what-we-do matters, as they occur. This day seems to me like a new era in our time. It is not a birthday, nor a new year's day, nor a leave-off-something day; but it is about an hour after the time of leaving you, our poor Phœnix, in the Salisbury stage. . . . Writing plays, novels, poems, and all such kind of vapouring and impossible schemes are floating in my head, which at the same time aches with the thought of parting from you, and is perplexed at the idea of I cannot-tell-what-about notion that I have not made you half so comfortable as I ought to have done, and a melancholy sense of the dull prospect you have before you on your return home; then I think I will make my new gown, and now I consider the white petticoat will be better candle-light worth. . . . .

"So much for an account of my own confused head, and now for yours. Returning home from the Inn, we took that to pieces, and ca[n]vassed you as you know is our usual custom. We agreed we should miss you sadly, and that you had been what you yourself discovered, *not at all in our way;* and although if the post-

master should happen to open this, it would appear to him to be no great compliment; yet you, who enter so warmly into the interior of our affairs, will understand and value it, as well as what we likewise asserted, that since you have been with us you have done but one foolish thing, *vide* Pinckhorn (excuse my bad Latin if it should chance to mean exactly contrary to what I intend). We praised you for the very friendly way in which you regarded all our whimsies, and, to use a phrase of Coleridge's, *understood us*. We had, in short, no drawback on our eulogy on your merit except lamenting the want of respect you have to yourself—the want of a certain dignity of action, you know what I mean, which, though it only broke out in the acceptance of the old justice's book, and was, as it were, smothered and almost extinct, while you were here; yet is it so native a feeling in your mind, that you will do whatever the present moment prompts you to do, that I wish you would take that one slight offence seriously to heart, and make it a part of your daily consideration to drive this unlucky propensity, root and branch, out of your character. Then, mercy on us, what a perfect little gentlewoman you will be! ! !

"You are not yet arrived at the first stage of your journey, yet have I the sense of your absence so strong upon me, that I was really thinking what news I had to send you, and what had happened since you had left us. Truly nothing, except that Martin Burney met us in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and borrowed fourpence, of the repayment of which sum I will send you due notice.

"Friday [Feb. 20, 1806]. Last night I told Charles of your matrimonial overtures from Mr. White, and of the cause of that business being at a *standstill*. . . .

"He wishes you success, and when Coleridge comes, will consult with him about what is best to be done. But I charge you, be most strictly cautious how you proceed yourself. Do not give Mr. W. any reason to think you indiscreet; let him return of his own accord, and keep the probability of his doing so full in your own mind; so I mean as to regulate your whole conduct by that expectation. *Do not allow yourself to see, or in any way renew your acquaintance with William, nor do not do any other silly thing of that kind; for you may depend upon it he will be a kind of spy upon you, and if he observes nothing that he disapproves of, you will certainly hear of him again in time.**

"Feb. 21. I have received your letter, and am happy to hear that your mother has been so well in your absence, which I wish had been prolonged a little, for you have been wanted to copy out the farce, in the writing of which I made many an unlucky blunder. . . . I wish you had [been with] us to have given your opinion. I have half a mind to write another copy and send it to you. . . . .

"I miss you sadly, and but for the fidget I have been in about the farce I should have missed you still more. I do not mind being called Widow Blackacre. . . .

"Say all in your mind about your lover now Charles knows of it; he will be as anxious to hear as me. All

* These italics are mine.

the time we can spare from talking of the characters and plot of the farce, we talk of you. I have got a fresh bottle of brandy to-day: if you were here you should have a glass, *three parts brandy*, so you should. . . . Charles does *not* send his love, because he is *not* here.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

[Endorsed]

"Miss Stoddart, Winterslow, near Salisbury.

"5*s*. 1*d*. paid."

Some coolness appears to have arisen between Miss Stoddart and Mr. White shortly after this, and Miss Stoddart provided herself with a new lover. It may be doubtful, however, whether the affair alluded to in what follows ever reached any serious stage:—

[March 13th, 1806.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"No intention of forfeiting my promise, but mere want of time, has prevented me from continuing my journal. You seem pleased at the long stupid one I sent, and therefore I shall certainly continue to write at every opportunity. . . . We have had, as you know, so many teasing anxieties of late, that I have got a kind of habit of foreboding that we shall never be comfortable, that he will never settle to work, which I know is wrong, and which I will try with all my might to overcome. . . . .

"We have had a letter from your brother, the same mail as yours, I suppose. . . . Why does he tease you with so much *good advice?* is it merely to fill up his

letters? . . . or has any new thing come out against you? . . . . I promised never more to give my *advice*, but one may be allowed to *hope* a little. And I also hope you will have something to tell me about Mr. W. Have you seen him yet? . . . .

"Do write soon. Though I write all about myself, I am thinking all the while of you, and I am uneasy at the length of time it seems since I heard from you. Your mother and Mr. White is running continually in my head, and this second winter makes me feel how cold, damp, and forlorn your solitary hours will feel to you. I would your feet were perched up again on our fender. . . .

"God bless you,

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB."

Two days later (March 15, 1806), Lamb wrote off a pretty long letter to Hazlitt, who was still at Wem, in default, it should seem, of any fixed purpose, or any plans for the future. Whether the Stoddart business lay heavily on his mind, and distracted his attention, I honestly do not know. There is not a hint anywhere as to whether he had quarrelled with Miss S., or whether it was she who broke off the correspondence in the prospect of a more advantageous match.

Lamb's letter is printed by Talfourd, and it is of no use bringing it forward here. It does not contain an atom of home news, or of matter directly personal to the subject of these memoirs; it is all talk about

pictures and picture-auctions. He wants to know what H. can be thinking of, to be down in Shropshire, or Wales—hunting, while there is so much in his line going on in town.

Mr. White, it seems, did not respond in a proper manner, did not "return of his own accord;" and in fact it came to nothing. Mr. Turner had not been heard of. Miss Stoddart's correspondent asks about him. Miss Lamb begins, too, to grow anxious about William, and to think it might not be such a "silly thing," after all, to renew acquaintance with him :—

"Friday [June 2, 1806].

"My dear Sarah,

". . . . I would wish to write you a long letter, to atone for my former offences, but I feel so languid that I am afraid wishing is all I can do. . . . . .

"We cannot come to see you this summer. Nor do I think it advisable to come and incommode you, when you for the same expense could come to us. . . . I wish it was not such a long, expensive journey, then you could come backwards and forwards every month or two.

"I am very sorry you still hear nothing from Mr. White. I am afraid that is all at an end. What do you intend to do about Mr. Turner? . . . . .

"William Hazlitt, the brother of him you know,* is in town. I believe you have heard us say we like him.

* Miss Lamb seems to have forgotten that William Hazlitt had been in correspondence with her friend a long time, and that she had mentioned him in some of her former letters as being so. * Jun Wm I course, was a different one

He came in good time, for the loss of Manning made Charles very dull, and he likes Hazlitt better than anybody except Manning. My toothache mopes Charles to death; you know how he hates to see people ill.* . . . . . .

"What is Mr. Turner? and what is likely to come of him? and how do you like him? and what do you intend about it? I almost wish you to remain single till your mother dies, and then come and live with us; and we would either get you a husband, or teach you how to live comfortably without. I think I should like to have you always, to the end of our lives, living with us; and I do not know any reason why that should not be, except for the great fancy you seem to have for marrying, which, after all, is but a hazardous kind of affair; but, however, do as you like, every man knows best what pleases himself best. . . . .

"I say we shall not come to see you, and I feel sure we shall not; but if some sudden freak was to come into our wayward heads, could you at all manage?

"Farewell. Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Miss Stoddart,

"Winterslow, near Salisbury."

A month passed without any letters that we know of. William Hazlitt had put himself outside the stage, and was up in town again, in and out of Lamb's more than

* He mentioned this once, however, as a peculiarity he had observed in Mr. Hazlitt's character.

ever; reconciling Lamb to the loss of Manning, as Mary tells us, but domiciled, as usual, at his brother John's in Great Russell Street.* Miss Stoddart had not ventured to London, nor had the Lambs gone down to see her at Winterslow, as was talked about. Mary's next shows that Mr. Turner's star was still in the ascendant, and that Sarah was not quite explicit enough about him to please her friend. The letter opens with "Hazlitt" and Charles starting for Sadler's Wells together. The former could almost count upon his fingers as yet the times he had seen the inside of a playhouse; but not so his companion:—

"July 2, 1806.

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"Charles and Hazlitt are going to Sadler's Wells, and I am amusing myself in their absence with reading a manuscript of Hazlitt's, but have laid it down to write a few lines to tell you how we are going on. Charles has begged a month's holiday, of which this is the first day, and they are all to be spent at home. We thank you for your kind invitations, and are half inclined to come down to you; but after mature deliberation, and many wise consultations, such as you know we often hold, we came to the resolution of staying quietly at home. . . . .

"The reason I have not written so long is that I worked and worked in hopes to get through my task before the holidays began; but at last I was not able,

* His house, No. 109, formed part of old Tavistock House: it has been long demolished.

for Charles was forced to get them now, or he could not have had any at all. . . . I have finished one [tale] to-day, which teased me more than all the rest put together. They sometimes plague me as bad as your *lovers* do you. How do you go on? and how many new ones have you had lately? . . . . .

"I am sorry you are altogether so uncomfortable. I shall be glad to hear you are settled at Salisbury; that must be better than living in a lone house companionless, as you are. . . . .

"Let me hear from you soon. . . Charles's love, and our best wishes that all your little busy affairs may come to a prosperous conclusion.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB."

[Saturday.]

"They (Hazlitt and Charles) came home from Sadler's Wells so dismal and dreary dull on Friday, that I gave them both a good scolding—quite *a setting to rights*; and I think it has done some good, for Charles has been very cheerful ever since.

"Write directly, for I am uneasy about your *lover*. I wish something was settled.

"God bless you. Once more, yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Sunday morning.—I did not put your letter in the post, hoping to be able to write a less dull letter, but I have been prevented, so it shall go as it is. . . . . .

"I am cooking a shoulder of Lamb (Hazlitt dines with us). It will be ready at two o'clock, if you can pop in and eat a bit with us.

"Miss Stoddart,
"Winterslow, near Salisbury."

While Mr. Turner and Mr. White were still wavering and uncertain, and Miss Stoddart—disappointed in the hope held out to her by the Doctor of a Maltese husband—was still resident with her mother at Salisbury, another person all at once started up, a Mr. Dowling, the owner or lessee of a farm in the neighbourhood. The matter was progressing in a highly satisfactory manner, when Miss Lamb wrote to her old friend on the 22nd October, 1806:—

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"..... I have received a long letter from your brother on the subject of your intended marriage. I have no doubt but you also have one on this business. I am well pleased to find that upon the whole he does not seem to see it in an unfavourable light. He says that if Mr. D. is a worthy man he shall have no objection to become the brother of a farmer; and he makes an odd request to me, that I shall set out to Salisbury to look at, and examine into the means of, the said Mr. D., and speaks very confidently as if you would abide by my determination. A pretty sort of an office, truly. Shall I come?

"The objections he starts are only such as you and I

have already talked over, such as the difference in age, education, habits of life, &c.

"You have gone too far in this affair for any interference to be at all desirable; and if you had not, I really do not know what my wishes would be. When you bring Mr. Dowling at Christmas, I suppose it will be quite time for me to sit in judgment upon him; but my examination will not be a very severe one. If you fancy a very young man, and he likes an elderly gentlewoman:* if he likes a learned and accomplished lady, and you like a not very learned youth, who may need a little polishing, which probably he will never acquire, it is all very well; and God bless you both together, and may you be both very long in the same mind.

"I am to assist you too, your brother says, in drawing up the marriage settlements—another thankful office! I am not, it seems, to suffer you to keep too much money in your own power, and yet I am to take care of you in case of bankruptcy, &c.; and I am to recommend to you, for the better management of this point, the serious perusal of Jeremy Taylor, his opinion on the marriage state, especially his advice against *separate interests* in that happy state. . . . .

"My respects to Corydon [Dowling], mother, and aunty. Farewell. My best wishes are with you.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Miss Stoddart, Salisbury."

* Miss Stoddart was only thirty-one or thirty-two, however.

Corydon Dowling was a Wiltshire man, and so a countryman of Miss Stoddart and her family. I cannot help suspecting that Corydon had an unpastoral eye to certain messuages in the village of Winterslow, appertaining to the new lady of his heart. For the present, adieu to Mr. Dowling, and let us see what is passing somewhere else.

My grandfather was still, or at all events again, in London, when Lamb's farce of 'Mr. H.' was brought out on the 10th December, 1806, at Drury Lane. The first piece was the opera of 'The Travellers.' My grandfather and Lamb had placed themselves in the first row of the pit. There was a good deal of applause at the conclusion of the prologue, and among the applauders Lamb himself was not the least vociferous. But the thing was hopelessly damned. Gentleman Lewis was there, and said that *he* could have made a good piece of it by a few judicious curtailments—"the most popular little thing that had been brought out for some time." But it was agreed on all sides (Lamb himself was the only dissentient voice) that if a tragedy had preceded, instead of 'The Travellers,' it might have done well.

It is said that the author joined in the hissing as he had done in the applause. We know that Horace Smith once did the same thing exactly on a first night. I am tempted to print the letter which the author wrote to Miss Stoddart the very next day, communicating the news of his failure. It is given by Talfourd, but not so accurately as could have been wished :—

"Don't mind this being a queer letter. I am in haste, and taken up by visitors, condolers, &c. God bless you.

"11 Dec. [1806].

"DEAR SARAH,

"Mary is a little cut at the ill success of 'Mr. H.,' which came out last night and *failed*. I know you'll be sorry, but never mind. We are determined not to be cast down. I am going to leave off tobacco, and then we must thrive. A smoking man must write smoky farces.

"Mary is pretty well, but I persuaded her to let me write. We did not apprize you of the coming out of 'Mr. H.,' for fear of ill luck. You were much better out of the house. If it had taken, your partaking of our good luck would have been one of our greatest joys. As it is, we shall expect you at the time you mentioned. But whenever you come you shall be most welcome.

"God bless you, dear Sarah,

"Yours most truly,

"C. L.

"Mary is by no means unwell, but I made her let me write."

CHAPTER X.

1807.

Mr. Hazlitt's engagement to Miss Stoddart.

CORYDON DOWLING turned out as ill as Corydon Turner and Corydon White had done before him; perhaps he did not like *settlements*. There is a large gap in the correspondence of Miss Lamb at this point, but not too large to mark appropriately the revolution which the next survivor of this interesting, and to me highly valuable series, discloses to view. William is once more the hero of the situation—*the* lover!

No date [but early in 1807].

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I have deferred answering your last letter, in hopes of being able to give you some intelligence that might be useful to you, for I every day expected that Hazlitt or you would communicate the affair to your brother; but as the Doctor is silent on the subject I conclude he yet knows nothing of the matter. You desire my advice, and therefore I tell you I think you ought to tell your brother as soon as possible; for at present he is on very friendly visiting terms with

Hazlitt, and if he is not offended by a too long concealment, will do everything in his power to serve you. If you choose that I should tell him, I will; but I think it would come better from you. If you can persuade Hazlitt to mention it, that would be still better, for I know your brother would be unwilling to give credit to you, because you deceived yourself in regard to Corydon. Hazlitt, I know, is shy of speaking first; but I think it of such importance to you to have your brother friendly in the business, that if you can overcome his reluctance it would be a great point gained; for you must begin the world with ready money—at least an hundred pound; for if you once go into furnished lodgings, you will never be able to lay by money to buy furniture.

"If you obtain your brother's approbation, he might assist you, either by lending or otherwise. I have a great opinion of his generosity, where he thinks it will be useful.

"Hazlitt's brother is mightily pleased with the match, but he says that you must have furniture, and be clear in the world at first setting out, or you will be always behindhand. He also said he would give you what furniture he could spare. I am afraid you can bring but few things away from your own house. What a pity that you have laid out so much money on your cottage; that money would have just done.

"I most heartily congratulate you on having so well got over your first difficulties, and now that it is quite settled, let us have no more fears. I now mean, not

only to hope and wish, but to persuade myself that you will be very happy together. . . . . .

"Do not tease yourself about coming to town. When your brother learns how things are going, we will consult him about meetings and so forth, but at present any hasty step of that kind would not answer, I know. If Hazlitt were to go down to Salisbury, or you were to come up here without consulting your brother, you know it would never do.

"Charles is just come in to dinner; he desires his love and best wishes.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Miss Stoddart,

"Winterslow, near Salisbury,

"Wilts."

So it appears that at the date of this letter Miss Stoddart was regularly and finally engaged to my grandfather; that the latter was in London, and on visiting terms with Dr. Stoddart (now returned from Malta); and that John Hazlitt was pleased with the proposed union, and ready to put out his hand to the young couple.

At an early stage of the engagement the lover grew a less regular correspondent than his mistress could wish; which will scarcely be a subject of wonder, when it is known that he carried with him through life a detestation of letter-writing of every description. Miss Stoddart complained of his negligence to Miss Lamb, who sent the following explanation:—

'My dear Sarah, No date [but the end of 1807].

"I am two letters in your debt, but it has not been so much from idleness, as a wish first to see how your comical love affair would turn out. You know I make a pretence not to interfere; but like all old maids I feel a mighty solicitude about the event of love stories. I learn from the lover that he has not been so remiss in his duty as you supposed. His effusion, and your complaints of his inconstancy, crossed each other on the road. He tells me his was a very strange letter, and that probably it has affronted you. That it was a strange letter I can readily believe, but that you were affronted by a strange letter is not so easy for me to conceive, that not being your way of taking things; but however it be, let some answer come, either to him or else to me, showing cause why you do not answer him—and pray by all means preserve the said letter, that I may one day have the pleasure of seeing how Mr. Hazlitt treats of love. . . . . .

"Yesterday evening we were at Rickman's, and who should we find there but Hazlitt; though if you do not know it was his first invitation there, it will not surprise you as much as it did us. We were very much pleased, because we dearly love our friends to be respected by our friends.

"The most remarkable events of the evening were, that we had a very fine pine-apple; that Mr. Phillips, Mr. Lamb, and Mr. Hazlitt played at cribbage in the most polite and gentlemanly manner possible; and that I won two rubbers at whist. . . . .

"Farewell! Determine as wisely as you can in regard to Hazlitt; and if your determination is to have him, heaven send you many happy years together. If I am not mistaken, I have concluded letters on the Corydon courtship with this same wish. I hope it is not ominous of change; for if I were sure you would not be quite starved to death, nor beaten to a mummy, I should like to see Hazlitt and you come together, if (as Charles observes) it were only for the joke sake.

"Write instantly to me.

"Yours most affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Saturday morning.

"Miss Stoddart, Winterslow, Salisbury."

So we see that it was a settled thing. "Hazlitt" was, perhaps, better than *Corydon* after all. He was making new friends, visiting Dr. and Mrs. Stoddart (in spite of an impression that the doctor secretly disliked him); meeting the Lambs (to *their* surprise) at the house of Mr. Rickman, whom he knew through his brother; and, besides, gradually beginning to earn repute in the literary world. His abridgment of Tucker's 'Light of Nature' was at last out, and was highly spoken of by persons competent to judge. Other things were in hand, among them a 'Reply to Mr. Malthus's Essay on Population.'

The early portion of this new work, which was in a series of letters, had appeared in Cobbett's 'Weekly

Political Register;' but Messrs. Longman took up the undertaking, and advertised it for publication in a single octavo volume, as follows :—

A Reply to Mr. Malthus's Remarks on the Poor, by a person of eminence, is in the press.

This must have been peculiarly gratifying to the author under the circumstances in which he was placed with regard to the Stoddarts. Whatever might be his own private estimate of the worth of the book as a book, he could not but see its value as raising him in the eyes of the Doctor, whose good will and opinion there can be no doubt that he was just now very well disposed to conciliate if he could. To have to point to a work like the Tucker, and to shine in publishers' lists as "a person of eminence," was therefore neither unpleasing nor unseasonable.

1807 was a busy year—the busiest one by far he had had yet. It was, in fact, almost the first one in which Mr. Hazlitt appeared on the literary stage with any degree of prominence. Besides the 'Reply to Malthus' and the abridgment of Tucker's 'Light of Nature Pursued,' he published a compilation, in two volumes octavo, entitled 'The Eloquence of the British Senate; or, Select Specimens from the Speeches of the Most Distinguished Parliamentary Speakers, from the Beginning of the Reign of Charles I. to the Present Time. With Notes, Biographical, Critical, and Explanatory.'

His object in preparing for publication a work, from which the pecuniary returns were probably very

inconsiderable, will be explained best in his own words:—

"This collection," he says in the advertisement, "took its rise from a wish which the compiler had sometimes felt, in hearing the praises of the celebrated orators of former times, to know what figure they would have made by the side of those of our own times, with whose productions we are better acquainted. For instance, in reading Burke, I should have been glad to have had the speeches of Lord Chatham at hand, to compare them; and I have had the same curiosity to know whether Walpole had anything like the dexterity and plausibility of Pitt. . . . Who could not give almost anything to have seen Garrick, and Betterton, and Quin?"

That Mr. Malthus's work created a great sensation at the time of its appearance, is familiar enough to all those who are versed in the literary history of the period. It was confidently expected by Mr. Malthus and his friends that, unless some vigorous legislation was set on foot, the country, in a few years, would be overpeopled and starved. There were a few who detected the absurd fallacy; there were a great many who did not. My grandfather was among those, I am glad to have to say, who set down the views of Malthus at their true worth; and he went farther, by exposing the shallow delusion in print.

Shelley was of a different opinion. In one of his letters from abroad, dated Oct. 8, 1818, he says: "I ought to say that I have just read Malthus in a French

translation. Malthus is a very clever man, and the world would be a great gainer if it would seriously take his lessons into consideration——"

Southey, however, was on Mr. Hazlitt's side in this question—a great and stirring one in its day, though we have grown beyond it a long time ago. He (Southey) says, in a letter to Captain Southey, Nov. 18, 1812, "I am writing upon the state of the poor, or rather the populace, for the 'Quarterly;' and the first thing to be done is *to make an exposure of Malthus.*"

Miss Stoddart's new project seemed to promise well so far. Her love affair with William Hazlitt ran smoothly enough into 1808. No fresh Corydons developed themselves. If there had been a little coolness on her side in consequence of his supposed neglecting to write, Miss Lamb's letter explained the remissness away; and as to his frankness in alluding, as we shall presently see, to *his* "old flame," it was a kind of frankness she liked: it was scarcely her "way of taking things" to be hurt by that.

In spite of Miss Lamb's injunction, I am afraid that Miss Stoddart did *not* preserve the letter, that she might see "how Mr. Hazlitt treated of love." Possibly it was a little too strange.

He sent her another, however, at the beginning of the next year, which she *did* keep, and which, as it is unique in its way, I may be pardoned for producing. There is no date, and the post-mark is defaced. The figures 1808 are legible, and it must have been in January:—

"Tuesday night.

"MY DEAR LOVE,

"Above a week has passed, and I have received no letter—not one of those letters 'in which I live, or have no life at all.' What is become of you? Are you married, hearing that I was dead (for so it has been reported)? Or are you gone into a nunnery? Or are you fallen in love with some of the amorous heroes of Boccaccio? Which of them is it? Is it with Chynon, who was transformed from a clown into a lover, and learned to spell by the force of beauty? Or with Lorenzo, the lover of Isabella, whom her three brethren hated (as your brother does me), who was a merchant's clerk? Or with Federigo Alberigi, an honest gentleman, who ran through his fortune, and won his mistress by cooking a fair falcon for her dinner, though it was the only means he had left of getting a dinner for himself? This last is the man; and I am the more persuaded of it, because I think I won your good liking myself by giving you an entertainment—of sausages, when I had no money to buy them with. Nay now, never deny it! Did not I ask your consent that very night after, and did you not give it? Well, I should be confoundedly jealous of those fine gallants, if I did not know that a living dog is better than a dead lion: though, now I think of it, Boccaccio does not in general make much of his lovers: it is his women who are so delicious. I almost wish I had lived in those times, and had been a little *more amiable*. Now if a woman had written the book, it would not have had this effect upon

me: the men would have been heroes and angels, and the women nothing at all. Isn't there some truth in that? Talking of departed loves, I met my old flame* the other day in the street. I did dream of her *one* night since, and only one: every other night I have had the same dream I have had for these two months past. Now, if you are at all reasonable, this will satisfy you.

"*Thursday morning.*—The book is come. When I saw it I thought that you had sent it back in a *huff*, tired out by my sauciness, and *coldness*, and delays, and were going to keep an account of dimities and sayes, or to salt pork and chronicle small beer as the dutiful wife of some fresh-looking, rural swain; so that you cannot think how surprised and pleased I was to find them all done. I liked your note as well or better than the extracts; it is just such a note as such a nice rogue as you ought to write after the *provocation* you had received. I would not give a pin for a girl 'whose cheeks never tingle,' nor for myself if I could not make them tingle sometimes. Now, though I am always writing to you about 'lips and noses,' and such sort of stuff, yet as I sit by my fireside (which I do generally eight or ten hours a day), I oftener think of you in a serious, sober light. For, indeed, I never love you so well as when I think of sitting down with you to dinner on a boiled scrag-end of mutton, and hot potatoes. You please my fancy more then than when I think of you

* This is the reference I meant. I suspect it was Miss Shepherd—Sally Shepherd, daughter of Dr. Shepherd of Gateacre. See above, p. 103.—W. C. H.

in—no, you would never forgive me if I were to finish the sentence. Now I think of it, what do you mean to be dressed in when we are married? But it does not much matter! I wish you would let your hair grow; though perhaps nothing will be better than 'the same air and look with which at first my heart was took.' But now to business. I mean soon to call upon your brother *in form*, namely, as soon as I get quite well, which I hope to do in about another *fortnight;* and then I hope you will come up by the coach as fast as the horses can carry you, for I long mightily to be in your ladyship's presence—to vindicate my character. I think you had better sell the small house, I mean that at 4. 10, and I will borrow 100*l.* So that we shall set off merrily in spite of all the prudence of Edinburgh.

"Good-bye, little dear!

"W. H.

"Miss Stoddart,
"Winterslow,
"Salisbury,
"Wilts."

CHAPTER XI.

1808.

The marriage.

It was as well that poor Miss Lamb's "God bless you, and may you be happy together" should come to something at last, and should not be all waste benedicites.

My grandfather, in spite of Miss Lamb's admonitions to the contrary, went down to Salisbury in the early part of February, 1808, and saw Miss Stoddart.

He had left his father's, it seems, without saying whither he was bound, and had come up to town, where he saw the Lambs. He did not go to his brother's this time, but took lodgings somewhere on his own account. On a Saturday afternoon he suddenly disappeared, and the Lambs did not know what had become of him. Meanwhile, Miss Stoddart had written to him, enclosing a drawing of Middleton Cottage, Winterslow, and had sent it, as usual, under cover to him at Mitre Court Buildings; and Miss Lamb, supposing that he had returned to Wem, forwarded it to him there. She at the same time wrote off to Miss Stoddart, to let her know what she had done:—

[12 Feb. 1808.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I have sent your letter and drawing off to Wem, Hazlitt's father's in Shropshire, where I conjecture Hazlitt is. He left town on Saturday afternoon without telling us where he was going. He seemed very impatient at not hearing from you. He was very ill, and I suppose is gone home to his father's to be nursed.

"I find Hazlitt has mentioned to you the intention which we had of asking you up to town, which we were bent on doing; but, having named it since to your brother, the Doctor expressed a strong desire that you should not come to town to be at any other house than his own, for he said it would have a very strange appearance. His wife's father is coming to be with them till near the end of April, after which time he shall have full room for you. And if you are to be married, he wishes that you should be married with all the proper decorums *from his house*. Now, though we should be most willing to run any hazards of disobliging him, if there were no other means of your and Hazlitt's meeting, yet, as he seems so friendly to the match, it would not be worth while to alienate him from you, and ourselves, too, for the slight accommodation which the difference of a few weeks could make; provided always, and be it understood, that if you and H. make up your minds to be married before the time in which you can be at your brother's, our house stands open, and most ready at a moment's notice to receive you. Only we would not quarrel unnecessarily with your brother. Let there be a clear necessity shown, and we will quarrel

with anybody's brother. Now, though I have written to the above effect, I hope you will not conceive but that both my brother and I had looked forward to your coming with unmixed pleasure, and are really disappointed at your brother's declaration; for next to the pleasure of being married, is the pleasure of making or helping marriage forward.

"We wish to hear from you that you do not take our *seeming change* of purpose in ill part, for it is but *seeming* on our part; for it was my brother's suggestion, by him first mentioned to Hazlitt, and cordially approved by me. But your brother has set his face against it, and it is better to take him along with us in our plans, if he will good-naturedly go along with us, than not.

"The reason I have not written lately has been that I thought it better to leave you all to the workings of your own minds in this momentous affair, in which the inclinations of a bystander have a right to form a wish, but not to give a vote.

"Being, with the help of wide lines, at the end of my last page, I conclude, with our kind wishes and prayers for the best.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"His direction is (if he is there) at Wem, in Shropshire. I suppose, as letters must come to London first, you had better enclose them, while he is there, to my brother, in London.

[Endorsed.]

"Miss Stoddart,

"Winterslow, near Salisbury, Wilts."

The Rev. Mr. Hazlitt had heard nothing of his son since the mysterious departure of the latter from home, and it was his turn to be alarmed. He knew that William frequented the Lambs', and (John Hazlitt being away from town, as I presume) he despatched a letter of inquiry to Mitre Court Buildings.

Lamb returned the following explanation. The letter is not quite correctly given by Talfourd, and I now print from the original :—

"Temple, 18 Febr., 1808.

"SIR,

"I am truly concerned that any mistake of mine should have caused you uneasiness, but I hope we have got a clue to William's absence, which may clear up all apprehensions. The people where he lodges in town have received direction from him to forward one or two of his shirts to a place called Winterslow, in the county of Hants [Wilts] (not far from Salisbury), where the lady lives whose Cottage, pictured upon a card, if you opened my letter you have doubtless seen, and though we have had no explanation of the mystery since, we shrewdly suspect that at the time of writing that Letter which has given you all this trouble, a certain son of yours (who is both Painter & Author) was at her elbow, and did assist in framing that very Cartoon, which was sent to amuse and mislead us in town as to the real place of his destination. And some words at the back of the said Cartoon, which we had not marked so narrowly before, by the similarity of the hand-writing to William's, do very much confirm the suspicion. If

our theory be right, they have had the pleasure of their jest, and I am afraid you have paid for it in anxiety. But I hope your uneasiness will now be removed, and you will pardon a suspense occasioned by LOVE, who does so many worse mischiefs every day.

"The Letter to the people where William lodges says, moreover, that he shall be in town in a fortnight.

"My sister joins in respects to you and Mrs. Hazlitt, and in our kindest remembrances & wishes for the restoration of Peggy's health.

"I am, Sir, your humble Servt., CH. LAMB.

"Rev. W. Hazlitt, Wem, Shropshire.
"Single."

The *cartoon* here referred to was, of course, the drawing of Middleton Cottage, Winterslow, which had come in Miss Stoddart's letter. At the time of answering that, Miss Lamb was not aware that William had set out to go to Wiltshire, and imagined, on the contrary, that he had returned to Wem. It was between the 12th and the 18th February that Lamb or his sister discovered where the truant had lodged, and so came at part of the truth, in time to relieve the anxiety of the family. What the exact force, or indeed nature of the "jest" was, is more than existing papers enable us to unravel.

Miss Stoddart was now beginning to be busy with preparations for her marriage, which was to be from her own house at Winterslow, as at present advised. Miss Lamb had been asked to come to the ceremony—to be

a bridesmaid! and had consented; but Charles was not yet invited. Miss Lamb was not writing quite so often now, because she thought that Sarah would be getting enough correspondence without hers; but in rather more than a month after the "cartoon" letter, she could not forbear writing to know about the dresses—what Sarah was going to wear, and what she had better wear, and such like gossip of the season:—

"16 March, 1808.

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"Do not be very angry that I have not written to you. I have promised your brother to be at your wedding, and that favour you must accept as an atonement for my offences. You have been in no want of correspondence lately, and I wished to leave you both to your own inventions.

"The border you are working for me I prize at a very high rate, because I consider it as the last work you can do for me, the time so fast approaching that you must no longer work for your friends. Yet my old fault of giving away presents has not left me, and I am desirous of even giving away this your last gift. I had intended to have given it away without your knowledge, but I have intrusted my secret to Hazlitt, and I suppose it will not remain a secret long, so I condescend to consult you.

"It is to Miss Hazlitt to whose superior claim I wish to give up my right to this precious worked border. Her brother William is her great favourite, and she

would be pleased to possess his bride's last work. Are you not to give the fellow border to one sister-in-law, and therefore has she not a just claim to it? I never heard in the annals of weddings (since the days of Nausicaa, and she only washed her old gowns for that purpose) that the brides ever furnished the apparel of their maids. Besides, I can be completely clad in your work without it, for the spotted muslin will serve both for cap and hat (nota bene, my hat is the same as yours), and the gown you sprigged for me has never been made up, therefore I can wear that. Or, if you like better, I will make up a new silk which Manning has sent me from China. Manning would like to hear I wore it for the first time at your wedding. It is a very pretty light colour, but there is an objection (besides not being your work, and that is a very serious objection), and that is, Mrs. Hazlitt tells me that all Winterslow would be in an uproar if the bridesmaid was to be dressed in anything but white; and although it is a very light colour, I confess we cannot call it white, being a sort of a dead-whiteish-bloom colour. Then silk perhaps in a morning is not so proper, though the occasion, so joyful, might justify a full dress. Determine for me in this perplexity between the sprig and the China-Manning silk. But do not contradict my whim about Miss Hazlitt having the border, for I have set my heart upon the matter. If you agree with me in this, I shall think you have forgiven me for giving away your pin; that was a *mad* trick; but I had many obligations and no money. I repent me of the deed, wishing I had

it now to send to Miss H. with the border; and I cannot, will not, give her the Doctor's pin, for having never had any presents from gentlemen in my young days, I highly prize all they now give me, thinking my latter days are better than my former.

"You must send this same border in your own name to Miss Hazlitt, which will save me the disgrace of giving away your gift, and make it amount merely to a civil refusal.

"I shall have no present to give you on your marriage, nor do I expect I shall be rich enough to give anything to baby at the first christening. But at the second, or third child's, I hope to have a coral or so to spare out of my own earnings. Do not ask me to be godmother, for I have an objection to that—but there is, I believe, no serious duties attached to a bridesmaid, therefore I come with a willing mind, bringing nothing with me but merry wishes, and not a few hopes, and a very little fear—of happy years to come.

"I am, dear Sarah,

"Yours ever most affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"What has Charles done that nobody invites him to the wedding?

"Miss Stoddart, Winterslow, near Salisbury."

I thought I might print the whole of this long letter as it stands, on the ground that it is the last in my hands of the correspondence between Miss Lamb and *Miss Stoddart*. Other letters must have passed, however,

for eventually the whole scheme was changed, and the Doctor had his way in regard to the place from which his sister was to be married.

The ceremony, so much talked and written about, at length was solemnized on *Sunday* morning, the 1st of May, 1808, at St. Andrew's Church, Holborn; the married couple afterwards breakfasted at Dr. Stoddart's, and then proceeded to Winterslow. The only persons present at the marriage, so far as I can collect, were Dr. and Mrs. Stoddart, and Mr. and Miss Lamb; but I strongly suspect that there were other guests, of whom there is no remaining record.

Lamb, in a letter to Southey, dated August 9, 1815, more than seven years after the event, thus alludes to his having been present: "I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Anything awful makes me laugh."

It was not an everyday kind of business this, with William Hazlitt for bridegroom, and Charles Lamb for best man, and Miss Lamb for bridesmaid—and all of a Sunday morning! I wonder whether Elia appeared at the altar in his snuff-coloured smalls? I wonder whether Miss Lamb wore, after all, the sprig dress, or the China-Manning silk, or a real white gown? I wonder in what way Lamb misbehaved, so as to leave so strong an impression on his own mind years after? To have been in St. Andrew's that day, and to have seen the whole thing from a good place, would have been a recollection worth cherishing; and there are plenty of men and women living who are old enough to

have done so, though of those who mixed in that "set" so early, scarcely one.

Mrs. Hazlitt's property at Winterslow, which had been left to her by her father, with a reversionary interest in what he bequeathed to Mrs. Stoddart for her life, was settled upon herself at her brother's instigation, and much to my grandfather's annoyance. There was about 120*l.* a year altogether.

Mr. Hazlitt and the Doctor had never been very good friends; and the Doctor's new politics, and the new prospects in Malta, arising out of his conversion to the more fashionable lay-creed of the day, had produced a decided estrangement before 1806 or 1807. He had set his face against the *threatened* alliance between the families, and was very anxious to get his sister out of the way of temptation, and marry her more suitably, or more in conformity with his own personal views, in Malta.

When he had found that there was no help for it, he had tried to behave with civility to his future brother-in-law, and had asked him to his house, when he settled again in England. But there was no real heartiness, I am afraid, in the friendship; and Mr. Hazlitt was not blind to the fact. Relations did not improve subsequently; the breach grew wider and wider.

The story goes, too, that Mr. Hazlitt said of an ephemeral newspaper speculation of Dr. Stoddart's, that if any one wanted to keep a secret, he could not do better than put it in the 'Correspondent!' Mr. Hazlitt himself has related the anecdote, which is no doubt sufficiently authentic; and of course, if it came to the

Doctor's ears, it was not a thing apt to make their communications friendlier.

No two people could be more opposite in their characters than the Doctor and Mrs. Hazlitt. She hated formality and etiquette, while he was all formality and etiquette.

There is an anecdote rather to the purpose, which may at this time of day, perhaps, be repeated without offence. Lieutenant Stoddart, their father, in the old days at Salisbury, would sometimes be drinking his grog when his children were in the room, and he would say to John, "John, will you have some?" to which John would answer, "No, thank you, father;" then he would say to Sarah, "Sarah, will you have some?" to which she would reply, "Yes, please, father."

Not that she ever indulged to excess, but she was that sort of woman. Her brother and Lord B., then Mr. B., had been fellow-collegians at Oxford, and Mr. B. and the Stoddarts were sufficiently intimate to warrant Miss S. (not the Doctor) in calling him by his Christian name. When Mr. B. became Lord B., and a high officer of state, she wrote to him to use his influence for somebody, and she was the plain, downright, impervious kind of woman, who did not perceive any impropriety in still keeping up the old familiarity of address. Her letter beginning "My dear H——" had to be intercepted by a judicious friend.

Mr. Hazlitt had rather admired these traits of character in her, meeting her occasionally at Lamb's or her brother's, before their marriage, and it still remained

to be seen whether they would be equally acceptable to him now that she was more than a friend to him. I have heard that her unaffected good sense was one of the things which made him resolve he would have her.

One evening, at Mitre Court Buildings, when my grandfather had escorted Miss Stoddart to the theatre, and had brought her back afterwards, Charles called for warm water, which Miss Lamb did not seem very anxious to produce. But Miss Stoddart unconsciously hunted out the kettle, and set it to boil, not at all to Miss L.'s satisfaction. But Mr. Hazlitt, the tradition runs, was highly pleased, as it seemed to him to show an honesty and sterlingness of character.

This connection with the Stoddarts, thus begun in 1808, was, however, of service in more than one respect; it certainly tended to infuse into the Hazlitt blood certain southern characteristics, among them a taste for formality and method; for my grandmother, with all her inattention and repugnance to domestic matters, was by no means destitute of a love of order, and her brother John was a precisian. The Celtic element may have been thought by some to predominate hitherto too exclusively, to the disadvantage and sacrifice of what are understood as the conventional gentilities. My great-grandfather was an Irishman, and my grandfather after him; nor am I quite positive that the Irish blood is extinct in us Hazlitts to this day, notwithstanding a second intermarriage with the Reynells, a quarter of a century later on.

CHAPTER XII.

1808.

At Winterslow—Literary disappointments—Domestic troubles —Visitors.

MR. AND MRS. HAZLITT settled for the present at Winterslow, in one of the cottages which belonged to the latter in the village. It was there, in the early months of his union, that my grandfather wrote his 'English Grammar,' founded on an entirely new principle, and *intended to* supersede Lindley Murray. It was not till 1810, however, that he succeeded in inducing anybody to print it, and it never came to a second edition. 'Murray's Grammar' is still kept in stock; Hazlitt's is only on the shelves of the curious.

He also prepared for the press an abridgment in English of Bourgoing's 'Tableau de l'Espagne Moderne,' which had been published at Paris in 1807, in 3 vols. 8vo., and reproduced in the original language by Stockdale of Piccadilly this year in the same form. But when the work was completed, no publisher could be found to undertake it, and it has remained in MS. ever since. It was more than whispered at the time that the translator had not done himself justice; but the truth may have been, that the interest in the subject, being ephemeral, was exhausted by Stockdale's French edi-

tion, and that buyers were in such a case apt to be shy of a condensed version, in which they could not be sure what was left out.

So the literary ventures of 1808 were not very happy or inspiring. Of the two enterprises in which he had engaged, one dropped dead from the press, and one never reached it.

Mrs. Hazlitt does not appear to have been so attentive and punctual a correspondent now as Miss Lamb had found her before. As to Hazlitt, he never wrote, if he could help it. The Lambs sometimes heard of them through Dr. Stoddart; but they were desirous, at least one of them was—the bridesmaid, of some real Winterslow news. So, on the 10th December, 1808 (their first winter together in Wiltshire), came the following budget of gossip, and a demand for "as good back."

"Dec. 10, 1808.

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I hear of you from your brother, but you do not write yourself, nor does Hazlitt. I beg that one or both of you will amend this fault as speedily as possible, for I am very anxious to hear of your health. . . .

"You cannot think how very much we miss you and H. of a Wednesday evening—all the glory of the night, I may say, is at an end. Phillips makes his jokes, and there is no one to applaud him. Rickman argues, and there is no one to oppose him.

"The worst miss of all to me is that when we are in the dismals, there is now no hope of relief from any quarter whatsoever. Hazlitt was most brilliant, most

ornamental, as a Wednesday-man, but he was a more useful one on common days, when he dropt in after a quarrel, or a fit of the glooms. . . .

"Charles is come home, and wants his dinner. . . . Tell us how you go on, and how you like Winterslow and winter evenings. . . . John Hazlitt was here on Wednesday, very sober.

"Our love to Hazlitt. . . . .

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Mrs. Hazlitt,
"Winterslow, near Sarum, Wilts."*

The event to which Miss Lamb was looking forward occurred on Sunday afternoon, January 15, 1809, at a quarter past four o'clock; it was a son; and the parents agreed to call him William. He only lived, however, till the 5th of July in the same year, and was buried on the evening of the 9th, at St. Martin's churchyard, Salisbury, in the grave of his grandfather Stoddart.

Against this blow they had to set the prospect of seeing the Lambs, and Martin Burney, and Colonel Phillips, down at Winterslow on a visit of a few weeks. Lamb had made up his mind to spend his holydays with them.

"June, 1809.

"'You may write to Hazlitt that I will certainly go to Winterslow, as my father has agreed to give me 5*l.*

* The *whole* of this letter will appear in the forthcoming new edition of the correspondence of Elia; it is not printed faithfully by Talfourd.

to bear my expenses, and has given leave that I may stop till that is spent, leaving enough to defray my carriage on the 15th July.'

"So far Martin has written, but further than that I can give you no intelligence, for I do not yet know Phillips' intentions, nor can I tell you the exact time when we can come. Nor can I positively say we shall come at all, for we have scruples of conscience about there being so many of us. Martin says if you can borrow a blanket or two, he can sleep on the floor without either bed or mattress, which would save his expenses at the Hut, for if Phillips breakfasts there, he must do so too, which would swallow up all his money. And he and I have calculated that, if he has no inn expenses, he may as well spare that money to give you for a part of his roast beef. We can spare you also just five pounds. You are not to say this to Hazlitt, lest his delicacy should be alarmed; but I tell you what Martin and I have planned, that if you happen to be empty-pursed at this time, you may think it as well to make him up a bed in the best kitchen.

"I think it very probable that Phillips will come, and if you do not like such a crowd of us, for they both talk of staying a whole month, tell me so, and we will put off our visit till next summer.

"The 14th of July is the day when Martin has fixed for coming.

"I should have written before, if I could have got a positive answer from them.

"Thank you very much for the good work you have

done for me. Mrs. Stoddart also thanks you for the gloves. How often must I tell you never to do any needlework for anybody but me?

"Martin Burney has been very ill, and still is very weak and pale. . . . I cannot write any more, for we have got a noble 'Life of Lord Nelson' lent us by our poor relation, the bookbinder, and I want to read as much of it as I can.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"On reading Martin's note over again, we guess the Captain means him to stay only a fortnight. It is most likely we shall come the beginning of July.

"Mrs. Hazlitt,

"Winterslow, near Salisbury."

The expectation disclosed in this very singular letter, which seems to point to a bygone phase of middle class English life, was not exactly fulfilled. The Lambs, in consequence of Miss Lamb falling suddenly ill, and remaining so for several weeks, did not reach Wiltshire till the autumn. Charles and his sister spent the month of October very happily with Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt. Burney and Phillips made their arrangements accordingly, and went down after all, Martin with his five pounds in his pocket, let us hope, to help to pay for Mrs. Hazlitt's roast beef.

The Lambs, however, enjoyed themselves excessively, by their own subsequent acknowledgment—particularly the evening walks, and the hashed mutton with

Wiltshire mushrooms for supper.* My grandmother's walking powers were rather too great for Miss Lamb, however, and Elia must have missed the town which he so loved. My grandfather likens him on this occasion to "the most capricious poet Ovid among the Goths." "The country people thought him an oddity," Mr. Hazlitt continues, "and did not understand his jokes. It would be strange if they had, for he did not make any, while he stayed. But when we crossed the country to Oxford, then he spoke a little. He and the old colleges were hail-fellow well met; and in the quadrangles he 'walked gowned.'"

Lamb has described this visit to Oxford in one of the Essays of Elia. He was accustomed to lament not having gone to one of the universities after leaving Christ's Hospital.

My grandfather was escort on the occasion, as we know from himself. He says:—

"I once took a party to Oxford with no mean *éclat;* showed them that seat of the muses at a distance,

With glistening spires and pinnacles adorn'd;

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and colleges; was at home in the Bodleian; and at Blenheim quite superseded the powdered Ciceroni that attended us, and that pointed in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures.

"I remember being much amused with meeting, on a hot dusty day, between Blenheim and Oxford, some

* See vol. ii., p. 229.

strolling Italians with a troop of dancing dogs, and a monkey in *costume* mounted on the back of one of them. He rode *en cavalier*, and kept his countenance with great gravity and decorum, and turned round with a certain look of surprise and resentment, that I, a foot passenger, should seem to question his right to go on horseback. This seemed to me a fine piece of practical satire in the manner of Swift."

The brother and sister, delighted with their trip, returned home on the 29th or 30th. Lamb found a letter of Coleridge's waiting for him, dated the 9th of October, and he answered it at once. In it he spoke of what they had been about, and gave the reason for his long silence.

"I have but this moment received your letter, dated the 9th instant, having just come off a journey from Wiltshire, where I have been with Mary on a visit to Hazlitt. The journey has been of infinite service to her. We have had nothing but sunshiny days, and daily walks from eight to twenty miles a-day; have seen Wilton, Salisbury, Stonehenge, &c. Her illness lasted but six weeks; it left her weak, but the country has made us whole."

Talfourd prints (not correctly) the letter post-marked November 7, 1809, in which Miss Lamb conveyed for them both the feelings with which they looked back, and the pleasure they had had; but I cannot resist a few extracts, as they are so much to the point:—

"The dear, quiet, lazy, delicious month," she begins, "we spent with you is remembered by me with such

regret, that I feel quite discontent and Winterslow-sick. I assure you I never passed such a pleasant time in the country in my life, both in the house and out of it—the card-playing quarrels, and a few gaspings for breath after your swift footsteps up the high hills excepted, and those drawbacks are not unpleasant in the recollection. We have got some salt butter, to make our toast seem like yours, and we have tried to eat meat suppers, but that would not do, for we left our appetites behind us. . . .

"I carried the baby-caps to Mrs. [John] Hazlitt, she was much pleased, and vastly thankful. Mr. H. got fifty-four guineas at Rochester, and has now several pictures in hand. He has been very disorderly lately. . . .

"We had a good cheerful meeting on Wednesday: much talk of Winterslow, its woods and its nice sunflowers. I did not so much like Phillips at Winterslow, as I now like him for having been with us at Winterslow. . . .

"I continue very well, and return you very sincere thanks for my good health and improved looks, which have almost made Mrs. Godwin die with envy; she longs to come to Winterslow as much as the spiteful elder sister did to go to the well for a gift to spit diamonds. . . .

"Farewell. Love to William, and Charles's love and good wishes for the speedy arrival of the 'Life of Holcroft' and the bearer thereof.

"Yours most affectionately,

"Tuesday." "M. LAMB.

"Charles told Mrs. Godwin, Hazlitt had found a well in his garden which, water being scarce in your country, would bring him in two hundred a-year, and she came in great haste the next morning to ask me if it were true.

"Mrs. Hazlitt,
"Winterslow, near Salisbury."

Mrs. Hazlitt miscarried on the 6th March, 1810, and again on the 6th of September, 1810.

Mr. Hazlitt was at this time busy with the 'Memoir of Holcroft,' for which the materials had been confided to him for his use. Miss Lamb alluded to it in her last, and does so once more in her next letter to Mrs. Hazlitt.

The well mentioned as having been found in the garden of the cottage was not so productive, unluckily, as Charles gave Mrs. Godwin to understand, for it never yielded a penny to anybody. The proprietor was sometimes in the habit, however, of placing himself behind it, where he could not be seen, and where he could overhear the talk of the Winterslovians; and this was the whole advantage he derived at any stage of his occupancy from the possession of the only well in the hamlet. It happened occasionally that the eavesdropping metaphysician found the germ of some subtle train of thought in the unsophisticated chit-chat of these Arcadians.

The letters from Lamb himself to my grandfather are few in number, but very suggestive in their purport.

They show that Mr. Hazlitt was still profoundly interested in everything connected with the Fine Arts, though he had ceased to be a servant of *that Muse*, and that he was observing in his mind's eye, and hoarding up stores of criticism against the time that his tongue should be loosened.

Talfourd printed the following from the original autograph now before me:—

[August 9th, 1810.]

"DEAR H.,

"Epistemon is not well. Our pleasant excursion has ended sadly for one of us. You will guess I mean my sister. She got home very well (I was very ill on the journey), and continued so till Monday night, when her complaint came on, and she is now absent from home.

"I am glad to hear you are all well. I think I shall be mad if I take any more journeys with two experiences against it. I find all well here. Kind remembrances to Sarah; have just got her letter.

"H. Robinson has been to Blenheim; he says you will be sorry to hear that we should not have asked for the Titian Gallery there. One of his friends knew of it, and asked to see it. It is never shown but to those who inquire for it. The pictures are all Titians, Jupiters and Ledas, Mars and Venuses, &c, all naked pictures, which may be a reason they don't show it to females, But he says they are very fine; and perhaps it is shown separately, to put another fee into the shower's pocket.

—Well, I shall never see it. I have lost all wish for Sights. God bless you.—I shall be glad to see you in London.

"Yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"*Thursday.*

[Endorsed.]

"Mr. Hazlitt,

"Winterslow, near Salisbury."

Mrs. Hazlitt wrote to Miss Lamb to say they were thinking of coming up:—

[Nov. 30, 1810.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I have taken a large sheet of paper, as if I were going to write a long letter; but that is by no means my intention, for I only have time to write three lines to notify what I ought to have done the moment I received your welcome letter, namely, that I shall be very much joyed to see you. Every morning lately I have been expecting to see you drop in, even before your letter came; and I have been setting my wits to work how to make you as comfortable as the nature of our inhospitable habits will admit. I must work while you are here, and I have been trying very hard to get through with something before you come, that I may be quite in the way of it, and not tease you with complaints all day that I do not know what to do.

"I am very sorry to hear of your mischance. . . . The alternating Wednesdays will chop off one day in the week from your jollydays, and I do not know how I

shall make it up to you. But I will contrive the best I can. Phillips comes again pretty regularly, to the great joy of Mrs. Reynolds. Once more she hears the well-loved sounds of 'How do you do, Mrs. Reynolds? How does Miss Chambers do?'

"I have drawn out my three lines amazingly. Now for family news. Your brother's little twins are not dead; but Mrs. John Hazlitt and her baby may be for anything I know to the contrary, for I have not been there for a prodigious long time. Mrs. Holcroft still goes about from Nicholson to Tuthill, from Tuthill to Godwin, and from Godwin to Tuthill, and from Tuthill to Nicholson, to consult on the publication or no publication of the life of the good man her husband. It is called the 'Life Everlasting.' How does that same Life go on in your parts?

"Good-bye. God bless you. I shall be glad to see you when you come this way.

"Yours most affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

* * * * * *

"Mrs. Hazlitt, at Mr. Hazlitt's,
"Winterslow, near Salisbury."

The 'Life Everlasting' was finished this year, so far as it was ever finished (for the fourth volume is still in MS.); but it lay by for a considerable time before Mr. Hazlitt or Mrs. Holcroft succeeded in making terms for its appearance in print. In 1810, the 'English Grammar,' completed by its author in 1808, was brought

out by Godwin in a small duodecimo volume; and the publisher himself produced a condensed version of the book under the title of 'Outlines of English Grammar.'

The Edinburgh reviewers had taken no notice of the 'Reply to Malthus,' now three years old, so far. But in August, 1810, somebody lumped it with another work of a similar cast, and wrote a paper upon the two, passing certain strictures on Mr. Hazlitt's book. Mr. Hazlitt, who was down at Winterslow when the 'Review' for August came out, does not seem to have become immediately aware of the circumstance; but so soon as the article was brought under his notice he prepared an answer, which Cobbett very promptly inserted in his 'Weekly Register' for November, 1810.

Lamb sent down to Wiltshire, on the very day it was published, the number of the 'Register' containing his friend's paper, and followed it up four days afterwards with a letter, which is now printed for the first time. It tells a sorry tale of home troubles besides, but alleviated by the receipt and due immolation of a very satisfactory Winterslow pig:—

"Dear Hazlitt,

"I sent you on Saturday a Cobbett, containing your reply to 'Edin. Rev.,' which I thought you would be glad to receive as an example of attention on the part of Mr. Cobbett to insert it so speedily. Did you get it? We have received your pig, and return you thanks; it will be drest, in due form, with appropriate sauce this day.

"Mary has been very ill indeed since you saw her, that is, as ill as she can be to remain at home. But she is a good deal better now, owing to a very careful regimen. She drinks nothing but water, and never goes out; she does not even go to the Captain's. Her indisposition has been ever since that night you left town, the night Miss W. came; her coming, and .... Mrs. Godwin coming and staying so late that night, so overset her, that she lay broad awake all that night, and it was by a miracle that she escaped a very bad illness, which I thoroughly expected.

"I have made up my mind that she shall never have any one again in the house with her, and that no one shall sleep with her, not even for a night: for it is a very serious thing to be always living with a kind of fever upon her; and therefore I am sure you will take it in good part if I say that if Mrs. Hazlitt comes to town at any time, however glad we shall be to see her in the daytime, I cannot ask her to spend a night under our roof. Some decision we must come to, for the harassing fever that we have both been in owing to Miss Wordsworth coming is not to be borne, and I had rather be dead than so alive. However, at present, owing to a regimen and medicines which Tuthill has given her, who very kindly volunteered the care of her, she is a great deal quieter, though too much harassed by company, who cannot or will not see how late hours and society tease her.

"Poor Phillips had the cup dashed out of his lips as it were. He had every prospect of the situation, when,

about two days since, one of the council of the R. Society started for the place himself; being a rich merchant, who lately failed, and he will certainly be elected on Friday. Poor P. is very sore and miserable about it.

"Coleridge is in town, or, at least, at Hammersmith. He is writing, or going to write, in the 'Courier' against Cobbett, and in favour of paper money.

"No news. Remember me kindly to Sarah. I write from the office.

"Yours ever,

"C. LAMB.

"Wednesday, 28 Nov., 1810.

"I just open it to say the pig upon proof hath turned out as good as I predicted. My fauces yet retain the sweet porcine odour. I find you have received the Cobbett. I think your paper complete.

"Mrs. Reynolds, who is a sage woman, approves of the pig.

"Mr. Hazlitt,

"Winterslow, near Salisbury, Wilts."

The Malthusian controversy was not done with till many years after this. I must beg leave to anticipate a little, for the sake of juxtaposition. It happened that in October, 1823, Mr. De Quincey had in the 'London Magazine' a paper on this much-vexed question, in which paper he went over ground preoccupied by Mr. Hazlitt, and, in fact, brought forward arguments which Mr. Hazlitt had disposed of as far back as 1807.

So in the next November there was a letter, under the *Lion's Head*, from Mr. Hazlitt, pointing out this, to the following effect:—

"*To the Editor of the 'London Magazine.'*

"SIR,

"Will you have the kindness to insert in the LION'S HEAD the two following passages from a work of mine published some time since? They exhibit rather a striking coincidence with the reasonings of the 'Opium-Eater' in your late number on the discoveries of Mr. Malthus, and as I have been a good deal abused for my scepticism on that subject, I do not feel quite disposed that any one else should run away with the credit of it. I do not wish to bring any charge of plagiarism in this case; I only beg to put in my own claim of priority. The first passage I shall trouble you with ralates to the geometrical and arithmetical series. . . . [Here comes the passage.*] This passage, allowing for the difference of style, accords pretty nearly with the reasoning in the 'Notes from the Pocket-Book of an Opium-Eater.' I should really like to know what answer Mr. Malthus has to this objection, if he would deign one—or whether he thinks it best to impose upon the public by his silence? So much for his mathematics: now for his logic, which the Opium-Eater has

* Hazlitt's 'Political Essays,' 1819, p. 403; but the article had already appeared in the 'Reply to Malthus,' 1807. The passage begins with—"Both the principle of the necessary increase," &c., down to "his mathematics are altogether spurious."

also attacked, and with which I long ago stated my dissatisfaction in manner and form following. [Here comes the second quotation.*]

"This, Mr. Editor, is the writer whom 'our full senate call all-in-all-sufficient.' There must be a tolerably large *bonus* offered to men's interests and prejudices to make them swallow incongruities such as those here alluded to; and I am glad to find that our ingenious and studious friend the *Opium-Eater* agrees with me on this point too, almost in so many words.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obliged friend and servant,

"W. HAZLITT."

Then, finally, in December, Mr. De Quincey published a letter in answer to Mr. Hazlitt's letter; but he virtually admitted the priority, at the same time that he disclaimed any plagiarism or intentional encroachment. Mr. Hazlitt seems to have considered the explanation sufficient, and the matter was suffered to drop. An independent article on Mr. Malthus's 'Measure of Value,' in the same magazine, but by a person who does not so much as refer to Hazlitt or De Quincey, closed the business finally, I believe, and if so, 1823 saw the discussion set at rest for ever. We, who did not live fifty years ago and wear knee-breeches, had better not get into a way of laughing too heartily or too

* "The most singular thing in this singular performance," &c., down to "because the scheme itself is impracticable."—'Political Essays,' p. 421.

bitterly (as it may be) at the follies of such as did. They had their crotchets and we have ours. We may be more nearly quits than is generally supposed.

So far my grandfather's domestic and literary affairs cannot be said to have thriven very conspicuously, notwithstanding that Messrs. Longman's list announced him even in 1807 to be "a person of eminence."

He had plenty of leisure at this period of his life, as he had had indeed from his childhood downward. Hitherto he had thought only; or if he had read, he had read little and that little desultorily. But now he began to turn his attention to books more, as things out of which he might make capital; and in these, his early married days, I trace to him Locke's Essay, Hobbes's 'Leviathan,' Berkeley, Priestley, and other authors of a congenial sort. Perhaps he did not go even to these with the best will possible, for, next to writing, reading *up* went most against the grain with him. But something had to be done; 120*l.* or 150*l.* a year would not keep them as matters stood; and Mrs. Hazlitt was again expecting to present him with an heir.

This addition to their comfort and to their responsibilities arrived on Thursday, the 26th September, 1811, at twenty minutes before four in the morning. Like the first, he was to be named William, after his father and his grandfather.

On the 2nd October came a congratulatory letter from Miss Lamb:—

"2 Oct., 1811. Temple.

"My dear Sarah,

"I have been a long time anxiously expecting the happy news that I have just received. I address you because, as the letter has been lying some days at the India House, I hope you are able to sit up and read my congratulations on the little live boy you have been so many years wishing for. As we old women say, 'May he live to be a great comfort to you.' I never knew an event of the kind that gave me so much pleasure as the little, long-looked-for, come-at-last's arrival; and I rejoice to hear his honour has begun to suck. The word was not distinctly written, and I was a long time making out the wholesome fact. I hope to hear from you soon, for I am anxious to know if your nursing labours are attended with any difficulties. I wish you a happy *getting up*, and a merry christening.

"Charles sends his love, perhaps though he will write a scrap to Hazlitt at the end. He is now looking over me; he is always in my way, for he has had a month's holiday at home; but I am happy to say they end on Monday, when mine begin, for I am going to pass a week at Richmond with Mrs. Burney. She had been dying; but she went to the Isle of Wight and recovered once more. When there, I intend to read novels and play at piquet all day long.

"Yours truly,

"M. Lamb."

Charles's "scrap" was as follows:—

"DEAR HAZLITT,

"I cannot help accompanying my sister's congratulations to Sarah with some of my own to you on this happy occasion of a man child being born.

"Delighted fancy already sees him some future rich alderman or opulent merchant, painting perhaps a little in his leisure hours for amusement, like the late H. Bunbury, Esq.

"Pray, are the Winterslow estates entailed? I am afraid lest the young dog, when he grows up, should cut down the woods, and leave no groves for widows to take their lonesome solace in. The Wem estate of course can only devolve on him, in case of your brother leaving no male issue.

"Well, my blessing and heaven's be upon him, and make him like his father, with something a better temper and a smoother head of hair; and then all the men and women must love him.

"Martin and the card-boys join in congratulations. Love to Sarah. Sorry we are not within caudle-shot.

"C. LAMB.*

"If the widow be assistant on this notable occasion, give our due respects and kind remembrances to her.

[Endorsed.]

"Mrs. Hazlitt,

"Winterslow, near Sarum, Wilts."

* The *C* of Lamb's signature measures one inch and a quarter in length; it slopes very much, or its extreme altitude would be somewhere about two inches. The height of the *b* is one inch.

I regret to say that this double epistle closes the series, which I have found of such eminent usefulness. There is a great chasm at 1811, and even when the correspondence recommences, it commences too late, and is too scanty and lukewarm to make it of particular consequence to us in our present object and design.

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER XIII.

1812.

William Hazlitt settled in London (1812)—Lessee of Milton's house in York Street, Westminster—A lecturer at the Russell Institution—Character and origin of the lectures—Country reading and contemplation turned to account at last.

THE year 1812 marked an important era in the life of William Hazlitt, and it may therefore conveniently and properly stand at the beginning of a new section of these volumes.

In 1812, a few months after the birth of their second but only surviving child, my grandfather and grandmother removed from Winterslow to London, and rented number 19 York Street, Westminster, of Mr. Jeremy Bentham. It was a house which had belonged, as tradition said, to Milton; from the parlour windows was a view of Mr. Bentham's own residence and garden, which backed upon the house of Milton. It is not improbable that originally the garden formed part of the poet's premises.

My grandfather came to town with very little book-knowledge, with no introductions, with very small independent resources, and with shy and unsocial habits. He had thought upon many subjects, and had committed some of his notions to paper; but his books were not popular, and their sale scarcely paid the printer's bills. He had renounced the profession of painting, because he had no hope of acquiring in it sufficient excellence and rank to please himself; and here he was, about to fight his way, and win bread for three mouths, in that to him new and strange vocation, popular authorship, which demanded just what he lacked, fluent expression and brilliant commonplace. He had a very fair stock of ideas to start with; but it was in the faculty of evolving them and clothing them in attractive phraseology that his weakness was.

These were the difficulties by which he felt that he was surrounded. Then there were certain counterbalancing advantages. His wife had a moderate competence; he knew the Lambs, the Stoddarts, and his brother's other friends; and his former publications, if they had brought him no money, at least brought him a share of celebrity, and introduced him to two or three of the booksellers.

He had not looked very far and wide out into the world, but he had penetrated very deeply into the recesses of his own good and warm heart, and had watched for years the subtlest operations of the human mind. With him, to know himself was to know others.

Such books as he was acquainted with, he had

mastered. He had gone with the eye of an analyst through Hobbes and through Locke. He was familiar with Chaucer and Boccaccio. He was versed in the writings of Taylor and Barrow. He was at home in Fielding and Smollett, in Richardson and Mrs. Inchbald. He had 'The New Héloise' by heart. But of the volumes which form the furniture of gentlemen's libraries, he was egregiously ignorant, and at any time would have cheerfully confessed his deficiency in the kind of information which is served up to the public of all countries by its authors. Mr. Hazlitt's resources were emphatically internal; from his own mind he drew sufficient for himself; and he had to see now, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, whether he had enough there to hold the world with, too.

The prospect did not seem, on the whole, very bright and encouraging for a man whose politics were those of the minority, who never read a book through after he was thirty, and who, in original composition, could scarcely at the outset see his way two sentences before him.

He inaugurated his change of plans, that is to say, his final settlement in the metropolis, promisingly enough. During the first year of his residence in London he delivered, at the Russell Institution, a series of lectures on the English philosophers and metaphysicians, ten in number. He was merely turning to account, of course, his early studies at home, supplemented and strengthened by later excursions, in the long winter evenings at Winterslow, into the writings of Hobbes, Locke, and other masters of the English school.

The following is an extract from the Minutes of the institution:—

"Russell Institution,
"December 19th, 1811.

"At a meeting of committee held this day, Mr. Whishaw in the chair. . . .

"Resumed * the consideration of Mr. Hazlitt's Letter, dated ——— † and Resolved that Mr. Hazlitt's proposal for giving a course of Lectures be accepted, and a letter be written to him by the Secretary, acquainting him with this resolution, and desiring that he will transmit the Draft of an advertisement for insertion in the public newspapers, to be considered and approved by the committee.

Copy of the proposed card of Mr. Hazlitt's Course of Lectures.

"Russell Institution,
"Dec. 26th, 1811.

"On Tuesday, the 14th of January, 1812, at this Institution, Mr. Hazlitt will commence a course of Lectures on the rise and progess of modern philosophy, containing an historical and critical account of the principal writers who have treated on moral and metaphysical subjects, from the time of Lord Bacon to the present day. The Lectures will be on the following Subjects:—

* There is no record of any preceding sitting on the subject.
† The date does not appear on the minutes.

"Lecture I. On the writings of Hobbes, showing that he was the father of the modern system of philosophy.

"Lecture II. On Locke's 'Essay on the Human Understanding;' or the formation of ideas in general.

"Lecture III. On Berkeley's principles of human knowledge, and on the nature of abstraction.

"Lecture IV. On Self-Love.

"Lecture V. Same subject continued, with an account of the writings of Hartley and Helvetius.

"Lecture VI. On Bishop Butler's theory of man, on the love of happiness, the love of action, and the human conduct.

"Lectures VII. and VIII. On the writers on Liberty and Necessity, and on Materialism.

"Lecture IX. On the Theory of Language; as treated by Horne Tooke, by the author of 'Hermes,' and Lord Monboddo.

"Lecture X. On Natural Religion.

"Tickets of admission, to persons not being proprietors of the institution, two guineas. To any member of the family of a proprietor or subscriber to the lectures, one guinea. The lectures to begin at eight in the evening, and to be continued weekly."

"THE ADVERTISEMENT.

"Russell Institution.
Dec. 26th, 1811.

"On Tuesday, the 14th of January, 1812. at this Institution, Mr. Hazlitt will commence a course of

lectures on the rise and progress of modern philosophy, containing an historical and critical account of the principal writers who have treated on moral and metaphysical subjects, from the time of Lord Bacon to the present day. Tickets of admission, &c. (as before)."

A perusal of the preceding syllabus must lead us to lament that the lectures exist for us at this time only in a fragmentary state. They were never printed in the author's lifetime, and all that could be recovered of them, after his death, was a few of the discourses, mutilated and unconsecutive, in an old damp-rotted hamper.

These have been published;* and their interesting and original character makes us strongly feel the loss of the remainder. The perfect course would have been a valuable possession.

A kind of indication that the lectures at the Russell

* My father included them in the 'Literary Remains,' 1836. He takes occasion, in a note, which I shall copy, to give an account of their history and fate:—

"The following Essays form part of a series of Lectures delivered with very great effect by my father at the Russell Institution, in 1813 [1812]. I found them with other papers in an old hamper which many years ago he stuffed confusedly full of MSS. and odd volumes of books, and left in the *care* of some lodging-house people, by whom it was thrown into a cellar, so damp that even the covers of some of the books were fast mouldering when I first looked over the collection. The injury to the MSS. may be imagined, Some of the Lectures, indeed, to my deep regret, are altogether missing, burnt probably, by the ignorant people of the house; and I have had the greatest difficulty in preparing those which remain for the press."

Institution were not pecuniarily remunerative, is that Mr. Hazlitt was induced shortly afterwards to seek an engagement on the *Morning Chronicle* as a parliamentary reporter. This was an occupation which was calculated to suit neither his tastes nor his health; it involved late hours, and the gallery at that time was a hotbed of intemperance. My grandfather's health had never been robust, and the sedentary life of a hard student had still further impaired it.

Like many other reporters, he was not a short-hand writer. He had no knowledge of stenography, or at best, no competent knowledge. He took notes of a very hurried description, restricting himself to general heads and salient points; and if he was not able, after his *turn*, to make out what he had written very satisfactorily, yet he had a memory which was retentive and accurate enough for that purpose; and I doubt whether anything worth preserving was lost through him. The complaint which I have heard made was, that he gave speakers credit for delivering better grammar and sense than was really the case; and this is a complaint which has attached so far to all reporters in all times. My friend, Mr. John Payne Collier, has a MS. copy of Coleridge's 'Christabel,' in Miss Stoddart's handwriting, which belonged to my grandfather, and with which were bound up, oddly enough, some blank leaves, serving him for his reporting notes. I also possess a volume of them; and very strange specimens of caligraphy they are, considering that Mr. Hazlitt, as a rule, wrote a beautifully clear hand.

He ran another danger, which was that of losing the thread of the debate, while he was listening to some favourite orator. He is said to have been so fascinated once by the eloquence of Plunket, that he omitted to take any notes at all of his speech. He himself tells a little anecdote of these days:—

"I have heard Sir Francis Burdett say things there [in the House of Commons] which I could not enough admire; and which he could not have ventured upon saying, if, besides his honesty, he had not been a man of fortune, of family, of character, ay, and a very good-looking man into the bargain!"

His career as a reporter was soon terminated by his utter dislike to the employment, and by the injury which his constitution suffered from the use of stimulants, in which he followed what was an universal propensity in his day among the members of the press. Some carried it to a greater excess than others. It was not necessary that he should carry it very far; his physical strength was unequal to much indulgence of any kind.

When he gave up the gallery, he did not leave the press, but transferred his services to the critical department of the *Chronicle*, occasionally contributing political articles. Among these latter were the celebrated 'Illustrations of Vetus,' which appeared in the *Chronicle* at the close of 1813, and attracted considerable attention.

He experienced great difficulty in the first instance, when he began to write for the newspapers; but he found that where the strong necessity for doing a thing

was present to him, he managed to surmount all obstacles.

He says himself: "I had not till then [about 1812] been in the habit of writing at all, or had been a long time about it; but I perceived that with the necessity the fluency came. Something I did, *took*, and I was called upon to do a number of things all at once. I was in the middle of the stream, and must sink or swim. I had, for instance, often a theatrical criticism to write after midnight, which appeared the next morning. There was no fault found with it—at least, it was as good as if I had had to do it for a weekly paper. I only did it at once, and recollected all I had to say on the spot, because I could not put it off for three days, when perhaps I should have forgotten the best part of it. Besides, when one is pressed for time, one saves it. I might set down nearly all I had to say in my mind while the play was going on. I know I did not feel at a loss for matter—the difficulty was to compress, and write it out fast enough."

He succeeded Mr. Mudford as theatrical critic on the *Chronicle*, quite at the commencement of 1814. Mr. Mudford procured a place on the *Courier*, of whose columns he availed himself to make known to the public that "it was impossible for any one to understand a word Mr. Hazlitt wrote."*

* Mr. W. Mudford was at one time editor of the *Courier*. He is the author of a work on the Battle of Waterloo, and others. There is an account of him in Jerdan's 'Autobiography.'

My grandfather's dramatic reminiscences go no farther back than Bannister, who used to delight him excessively, he tells us, in *Lenitive* in the 'Prize,' when he was a boy. Northcote told him that Bannister was an imitator of Edwin, but at a considerable distance. Northcote spoke very well of Edwin. Liston appeared to Mr. Hazlitt to have more comic humour than any one in his time, though he was not properly an actor. Mr. Hazlitt has seen him walk along the streets with an air of melancholy—the *player's* melancholy—a book in his hand, and a fixed expression, as if he had the lock-jaw.

Edmund Kean and Miss Stephens were Mr. Hazlitt's great favourites, but there were others for whose performances he had an admiration and relish, as, for instance, Miss Kelly and *Master* Betty.

"I (not very long ago) had the pleasure," he says, writing in 1821, "of spending an evening with Mr. Betty, when we had some 'good talk' about the good old times of acting. I wanted to insinuate that I had been a sneaking admirer, but could not bring it in. As, however, we were putting on our greatcoats downstairs, I ventured to break the ice by saying, 'There is one actor of that period of whom we have not made honourable mention: I mean Master Betty.' 'Oh!' he said, 'I have forgot all that.' I replied that he might, but that I could not forget the pleasure I had had in seeing him. On which he turned off, and shaking his sides heartily, and with no measured demand upon his lungs, called out, 'Oh, memory, memory!' in a way

that showed the full force of the allusion. I found afterwards that the subject did not offend, and we were to have drunk some Burton ale together the following evening, but were prevented."

A young Scotchman once tried to prove to him that Miss Stephens was inferior to Mrs. Dickons, because Mrs. Dickons surpassed her in sacred music!

He has preserved some other anecdotes of his experiences as a dramatic critic, which are better related in his words than in mine:—

"I went to see him [Mr. Kean] the first night of his appearing in *Shylock*.* I remember it well. The boxes were empty, and the pit not half full; 'some quantity of barren spectators and idle renters were thinly scattered to make up a show.' The whole presented a dreary, hopeless aspect. I was in considerable apprehension for the result. From the first scene in which Mr. Kean came on, my doubts were at an end.

"I had been told to give as favourable an account as I could. I gave a true one. I am not one of those who, when they see the sun breaking from behind a cloud, stop to ask others whether it is the moon. Mr. Kean's appearance was the first gleam of genius breaking athwart the gloom of the stage, and the public have since gladly basked in its ray, in spite of actors, managers, and critics.

"I cannot say that my opinion has much changed since that time. Why should it? I had the same eyes

* January 26, 1814, at Drury Lane.

to see with that I have now.* . . . . My opinions have been sometimes called singular: they are merely sincere. I say what I think: I think what I feel. I cannot help receiving certain impressions from things; and I have sufficient courage to declare (somewhat abruptly) what they are. This is the only singularity I am conscious of. . . . . I did not endeavour to persuade Mr. Perry † that Mr. Kean was an actor that would not last, merely because he had not lasted; nor that Miss Stephens knew nothing of singing, because she had a sweet voice.

"What I have said of any actor has never arisen from private pique of any sort. Indeed, the only person on the stage with whom I have ever had any personal intercourse, is Mr. Liston, and of him I have not spoken 'with the malice of a friend.'

"I have heard that once, when Garrick was acting *Lear*, the spectators in the front row of the pit, not being able to see him well in the kneeling scene, where he utters the curse, rose up; when those behind them, not willing to interrupt the scene by remonstrating, immediately rose up too, and in this manner the whole pit rose up, without uttering a syllable, and so that you might hear a pin drop.

"At another time, the crown of straw which he wore in the same character fell off, or was discomposed, which would have produced a burst of laughter in any common actor to whom such an accident had happened;

* This was written in or about 1821.

† James Perry, Esq., proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*.

but such was the deep interest in the character, and such the power of riveting the attention possessed by this actor, that not the slightest notice was taken of the circumstance, but the whole audience remained bathed in silent tears.

"An incident in my own history, that delighted or tormented me very much at the time, I may have long since blotted from my memory, or have great difficulty in calling to mind after a certain period; but I can never forget the first time of my seeing Mrs. Siddons act—which is as if it happened yesterday; and the reason is because it has been something for me to think of ever since.

"One of the most affecting things we know is to see a favourite actor take leave of the stage. We were present not long ago, when Mr. Bannister quitted it. We do not wonder that his feelings were overpowered on the occasion: ours were nearly so, too. We remembered him in the first heyday of our youthful spirits, in the 'Prize,' in which he played so delightfully with that fine old croaker Suett and Madame Storace—in the farce of 'My Grandmother,' in the 'Son-in-Law,' in 'Autolycus,' and in 'Scrub,' in which our satisfaction was at its height.

"There was a dance in the pantomime at Covent Garden two years ago [1824] which I could have gone to see every night. I did go to see it every night that I could make an excuse for that purpose. It was nothing; it was childish. Yet I could not keep away from it. Some young people came out of a large twelfth-cake,

dressed in full court costume, and danced a quadrille, and then a minuet, to some divine air. Was it that it put me in mind of my schoolboy days, and of the large bunch of lilac that I used to send as a present to my partner? or of times still longer past, the court of Louis XIV., the Duke de Nemours, and the Princess of Cleves? or of the time when she who was all grace moved in measured steps before me, and wafted me into Elysium? I know not how it was, but it came over the senses with a power not to be resisted.

"Mrs. Siddons was in the meridian of her reputation, when I first became acquainted with the stage. She was an established veteran when I was an unfledged novice; and, perhaps, played those scenes without emotion which filled me and so many others with delight and awe. So far I had the advantage of her, and of myself, too. . . . . I was stunned and torpid after seeing her in any of her great parts. I was uneasy, and hardly myself; but I felt (more than ever) that human life was something very far from being indifferent, and I seemed to have got a key to unlock the springs of joy and sorrow in the human heart. This was no mean possession, and I availed myself of it with no sparing hand. . . . . The very sight of her name in the playbills, in 'Tamerlane' or 'Alexander the Great,' threw a light upon the day, and drew after it a long trail of eastern glory, a joy and felicity unutterable, that has since vanished in the mists of criticism and the glitter of idle distinctions.

"I fancied that I had a triumph some time ago over

a critic and connoisseur in music, who thought little of the minuet in 'Don Giovanni;' but the same person redeemed his pretensions to musical taste, in my opinion, by saying of some passage in Mozart, "this is a soliloquy equal to any in 'Hamlet.'"

"I remember a very genteel young couple in the boxes of Drury Lane being much scandalized, some years ago, at the phrase in 'A New Way to Pay Old Debts'—'an insolent piece of paper,' applied to the contents of a letter: it wanted the modern lightness and indifference."

"When I formerly had to do with these sort of critical verdicts, I was generally sent out of the way, when any *débutant* had a friend at court, and was to be tenderly handled. For the rest, or those of robust constitutions, I had *carte blanche* given me. Sometimes I ran out of the course, to be sure. Poor Perry! what bitter complaints he used to make, that by running-a-muck at lords and Scotchmen, I should not leave him a place to dine out at! The expression of his face at these moments, as if he should shortly be without a friend in the world, was truly pitiable. What squabbles we used to have about Kean and Miss Stephens, the only theatrical favourites I ever had.

"Mrs. Billington had got some notion that Miss Stephens would never make a singer; and it was the torment of Perry's life (as he told me in confidence) that he could not get any two people to be of the same opinion on any one point.

"I shall not easily forget bringing him my account

of her first appearance in the 'Beggar's Opera.' I have reason to remember that article; it was almost the last I ever wrote with any pleasure to myself. I had been down on a visit to my friends near Chertsey, and, on my return, had stopped at an inn at Kingston-upon-Thames, where I had got the 'Beggar's Opera,' and had read it over night. The next day I walked cheerfully to town. It was a fine sunny morning in the end of autumn, and as I repeated the beautiful song, 'Life knows no return of spring,' I meditated my next day's criticism, trying to do all the justice I could to so inviting a subject. I was not a little proud of it by anticipation. I had just then begun to stammer out my sentiments on paper, and was in a kind of honeymoon of authorship. . . . . I deposited my account of the play at the *Morning Chronicle* office in the afternoon, and went to see Miss Stephens as Polly. . . . . When I got back, after the play, Perry called out, with his cordial, grating voice, 'Well, how did she do?' and on my speaking in high terms, answered that 'he had been to dine with his friend the Duke; that some conversation had passed on the subject; he was afraid it was not the thing; it was not the true *sostenuto* style; but as I had written the article (holding my peroration on the 'Beggar's Opera' carelessly in his hand), it might pass.'

"I could perceive that the rogue licked his lips at it, and had already in imagination 'bought golden opinions of all sorts of people' by this very criticism; and I had the satisfaction the next day to meet Miss Stephens

coming out of the editor's room, who had been to thank him for his very flattering account of her."

In criticising Kemble's *King John*, as it was performed at Covent Garden, December 7, 1816, Mr. Hazlitt observes: "We wish we had never seen Mr. Kean. He has destroyed the Kemble religion; and it is the religion in which we were brought up."

Mr. Hazlitt said that he had seen some actors who had been favourites in his youth, and "cried up in the top of the compass," treated, from having grown old and infirm, with the utmost indignity, and almost hooted from the stage. He had seen poor —— come forward under these circumstances to stammer out an apology, with the tears in his eyes (which almost brought them into Mr. Hazlitt's), to a set of apprentice-boys and box-lobby loungers, who neither knew nor cared what a fine performer and a fine gentleman he was thought twenty years ago.

Latterly, my grandfather always had a place at Covent Garden kept for him—the seat in the second tier next to the private boxes, so that he could lean his back against the partition. But occasionally, when he went with friends, more particularly the Reynells, he would go where they did, which was into the *looking-glass* box, if it happened to be vacant, because my mother liked that best.

He was in a terrible way one evening, and terrified the box keeper—"Old Pantaloon," as they called him—out of his wits, because this box (though pre-engaged)

was occupied, they arriving late. It ended by the interlopers having to clear out.

He wrote at successive periods for the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Champion*, edited by Mr. John Scott (who was afterwards editor of the *London Magazine*), the *Examiner*, and the *Times*.

"How I came," he says, "to be regularly transferred from one of these papers to the other, sometimes formally and sometimes without ceremony, till I was forced to quit the last-mentioned by want of health and leisure, would make rather an amusing story, but that I do not choose to tell 'the secrets of the prison-house.'"

He has thought fit, however, to take us a little behind the curtain in regard to the *Morning Chronicle*, with which the eventual severance of his connexion as a regular contributor, about 1814, appears to have been owing to unhandsome treatment on the part of the proprietary. He says:—

"A writer whom I knew very well [he is alluding to himself] cannot gain an admission to Drury Lane Theatre because he does not lounge into the lobbies or sup at the Shakespeare. Nay, the same person having written upwards of sixty columns of original matter, on politics, criticism, *belles-lettres*, and *virtù* in a respectable morning paper, in a single half-year, was, at the end of that period, on applying for a renewal of his engagement, told by the editor 'he might give in a specimen of what he could do.' One would think sixty columns of the *Morning Chronicle* were a sufficient specimen of what a man could do. But while this

person was thinking of his next answer to Vetus, or his account of Mr. Kean's performance of *Hamlet*, he had neglected 'to point the toe,' to hold up his head higher than usual (having acquired a habit of poring over books when young), and to get a new velvet collar to an old-fashioned greatcoat. These are 'the graceful ornaments to the columns of a newspaper—the Corinthian capitals of a polished style.' This unprofitable servant of the press found no difference in himself before or after he became known to the readers of the *Morning Chronicle*, and it accordingly made no difference in his appearance or pretensions."

CHAPTER XIV.

1814-1815.

Full of Work.

I FIND newspaper-work his mainstay during 1814 and 1815. He wrote regularly for the *Chronicle*, and occasionally for the *Champion* and *Examiner*. The review of Wordsworth's 'Excursion' in the last is his.

Wordsworth had sent Lamb a copy of the poem, and one day, while Lamb was out, Martin Burney came and took the book away. My grandfather wanted the copy for his review, and had sent Martin in search of it. Lamb, when he found that the volume had disappeared, and learned the circumstances, was very much annoyed;* and my grandfather, understanding that he had taken offence, came to his rooms and "blew up" him and Mary well. "Blow up" is Lamb's own word; and Lamb (in a letter to a friend) adds, that he supposed it would come to a breach. Which was, in fact, the case.

* Lamb was full of crotchets. He once made an extravagant outcry, because Coleridge came while he was away, and took Lamber's 'Table Talk.'

In the correspondence between Lamb and Wordsworth there are several references to this affair. Lamb had been invited to write a paper on 'The Excursion' in the *Quarterly*, and as there was some delay about it, he explained to the author that it arose through Hazlitt's "unlucky detention of the book." At the same time he put in a word for his friend. "His remarks," he could not help saying, "had some vigour in them, particularly something about an old ruin being too modern for *your primæval nature*, and *about a lichen*." In his next letter to the poet, he wrote:—"Your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton, as much as the author of 'The Excursion' does, *toto cœlo*, differ in his notion of a country life from the picture which W. H. has exhibited of the same."

The criticism, which, according to Lamb, wore a look of haste, made no difference whatever in the relations between Hazlitt and Wordsworth, which had never been cordial, or, with the exception of the short visit to Nether-Stowey in 1798, and to Grasmere in 1803, at all intimate. I am afraid that Wordsworth's letters to Lamb contained sometimes severe things about W. H., and it cannot but be observed that if Lamb wants to fire off a sly epigram against W. H., he generally does so in his Grasmere parcel.

My grandfather had become acquainted in 1812 with Haydon, the historical painter. He met him, one day, at Northcote's, whom he had known since his youth, and who lived at 39, Argyll Street, Regent Str

On this occasion they left the house together, it seems, and walked some distance, my grandfather expatiating on Shakespeare's 'Macbeth.' This was the commencement of their knowledge of each other, but they never became intimate. My grandfather unluckily could not be induced to form a very exalted estimate of Haydon's powers, and Haydon reciprocated by attempting to paint upon paper a man whom he was incapable of understanding.

Haydon was an extraordinary egotist, and was therefore very jealous of egotism, when he observed it in other people. He congratulated himself, I find, on being a better Christian than Shelley, Keats, and the rest of that school. "Luckily for me," he says, "I was deeply impressed with the denunciations, the promises, the hopes, the beauty of Christianity;" and again, he observes: "I never heard any sceptic, but Hazlitt, discuss the matter with the gravity such a question demanded." I suspect that Haydon would have found it difficult to maintain his position, if Mr. Hazlitt had confronted him with "How do you know, sir, that I *am* a sceptic?" Perhaps Haydon may be said to have been a little too lavish of his animadversions. He was not peculiarly proof against criticism, nor very indifferent to what people said about him, and he might, with advantage to himself, have given an example of forbearance and tenderness. Besides, he should not have associated with a set whose religious opinions were so repugnant to his own; there was the great risk that he might be mistaken for one of them. I have not seen

Mr. Haydon's picture of Christ, in which he introduced Mr. Hazlitt "looking at the Saviour *as an investigator*, Keats in the background, and Wordsworth 'bowing in reverence and awe.'" It is singular enough that he should have selected two "sceptics" for such a purpose as this, even though one of them was only brought in by virtue of his critical faculty. This happened in 1817, just before the artist removed to Lisson Grove North.

A little prior to this, the notorious 'Catalogue Raisonnée' of the British Institution was published, and was reviewed by Mr. Hazlitt in the *Examiner* for 1816. He called it "the most extraordinary that ever appeared in a country making pretensions to civilization," and declared that "the day after it came out, it ought to have been burnt by the common hangman." Here he had all lovers of art on his side—and Mr. Haydon. Northcote, however, was so delighted with it, that he ordered a long candle the first evening of its appearance, and went to bed to read it in ecstasy! So he told Haydon.

Haydon's 'Solomon' had succeeded in defiance of some adverse criticisms upon it beforehand on the part of friends, much to the painter's exultation. He sent my grandfather a card for the private view.

"The greatest triumph," says he (1814), "was over Hazlitt. My friend Edward Smith, a Quaker, had met him in the room, and Hazlitt abused the picture in his spitish humour; but in coming round he met me, and holding out his two cold fingers, said, 'By God, sir, it is a victory,' [and he] went away and wrote a capital criticism in the *Morning Chronicle*."

I have the strongest suspicion that Haydon's "greatest triumph" was no triumph at all, and that the "capital criticism in the *Morning Chronicle*" proceeded from the writer's natural kindness of heart, for once *at any rate*, getting the better of his judgment. To Edward Smith he could afford to be more candid. If Haydon had not been a struggling and poor man, the criticism might not have been so capital, for my grandfather's opinion of him was by no means high.

Haydon says again:—"One day I called on him and found him arranging his hair before a glass, trying different effects, and asking [he asked?] me my advice whether he should show his forehead more or less. In that large wainscoted room Milton had conceived, and perhaps written, many of his finest thoughts, and there sat one of his critics admiring his own features. Bentham lived next door. We used to see him bustling away, in his sort of half-running walk in the garden.

"Both Hazlitt and I looked with a longing eye from the windows of the room at the white-haired philosopher in his leafy shelter, his head the finest and most venerable ever placed on human shoulders."

The breach with the Lambs, after the *blowing up*, did not last very long. They were at what was to have been a christening party at my grandfather's in York Street, in the September of 1814, as I collect from a passage in Mr. Haydon's 'Autobiography.' Haydon was also there on the occasion, and has recorded his impressions. He says:—

"In the midst of Hazlitt's weaknesses, his parental affection was beautiful. He had one boy. He loved him, doated on him. He told me one night this boy was to be christened. 'Will ye come on Friday?' 'Certainly,' said I. His eye glistened. Friday came, but as I knew all parties, I lunched heartily first, and was there punctually at four. Hazlitt then lived in Milton's House, Westminster, next door to Bentham.

"At four I came, but he was out. I walked up and found his wife ill by the fire in a bed-gown—nothing ready for guests, and everything wearing the appearance of neglect and indifference. I said, 'Where is Hazlitt?' 'Oh, dear, William has gone to look for a parson.' 'A parson! why, has he not thought of that before?' 'No, he didn't.' 'I'll go and look for him,' said I; and out I went into the Park, through Queen's Square, and met Hazlitt in a rage coming home. 'Have ye got a parson?' 'No, sir, these fellows are all out.' 'What will you do?' 'Nothing.'"

Nothing *was* done that day, but a good deal of company, including Charles and Mary Lamb, dropped in soon afterwards, and there was "good talk," but no victuals that pleased Mr. Haydon.

The christening took place, however, on the 26th of September that year, at St. Margaret's, Westminster; it was the little boy's third birthday. Martin Burney and Walter Coulson were the godfathers.*

* While my father was quite a little fellow, he went to Mr. Black's at Millbank to spend the day, and going down to the river with a bucket to get water for Black's garden, he fell in, and was rescued by his host's dog Platoff.

I have heard odd accounts of that York Street establishment. My grandmother was woefully undomestic, and my grandfather "hated," to use his own words, "the formal crust of circumstances, and the mechanism of society."

As for my grandfather, he had been brought up in the country by parents who were in indifferent circumstances, and who were not of a very methodical turn of mind. At an early period, he seems to have been left a good deal to his own resources and inclinations, and when very young studied painting under his brother John, who was very far from being a formalist, and at Paris, in the Louvre, where he had to shift for himself with very slender means. We know that apart from any merely sentimental and transitory attachments he may have formed, he was disappointed in love at an early age, in a manner which preyed upon his spirits afterwards, and that he never thoroughly rallied from the blow. Added to all this, he was induced to enter into a marriage which was certainly not one of choice (though it was in no way forced upon him), and the woman with whom he thus knit himself permanently was one of the least domestic of her sex. She was a lady of excellent disposition, an affectionate mother, and endowed with no ordinary intelligence and information. But for household economy she had not the slightest turn; and she was selfish, unsympathizing, without an idea of management, and destitute of all taste in dress.

She was fond of finery, but her finery was not always

very congruous. A lady is living who recollects very well the first visit Mrs. Hazlitt paid to her family at Bayswater. It was a very wet day, and she had been to a *walking match.* She was dressed in a white muslin gown, a black velvet spencer, and a Leghorn hat with a white feather. Her clothes were perfectly saturated, and a complete change of things was necessary, before she could sit down.

The stiff, ceremonious ways of Dr. Stoddart and his family did not please her at all. When one of her nephews was praised in her hearing as an example of good breeding and politeness, she laughed, and exclaimed, "Oh, do you like such manners? John seems to me like an old-fashioned dancing-master."

The hall at York Street was a great square place like a kitchen, and the parlour where Mr. Hazlitt sat was upstairs. It was a big, wainscoted room, with two windows, which looked upon the garden of Jeremy Bentham's house; the mantelpiece was an old-fashioned high piece of architecture, which my grandfather had made a note-book of by covering with hieroglyphical memoranda for future essays.

There was Mrs. Tomlinson, the housekeeper, and her two daughters, of whom one was a single lady, the other was married to Private ——, of Her Majesty's —— foot.* This gallant soldier was frequently asked

* Lamb's *Becky* was originally at my grandfather's. Was she a daughter of Mrs. T.? I should think so. An apt pupil, at any rate; for she ruled the roost at Lamb's, as her mother or mistress did at 19, York Street.

in by Mrs. T., his affectionate mamma-in-law, and there was high festival below stairs on these occasions.

Between the consumption of victuals and drink in the kitchen, and the consumption in the parlour, where the same set came to dinner about three times a week, the household expenses must have been considerable, with all the discomfort and absence of method observable in the arrangements. Mr. Walter Coulson and his brother were sometimes to be seen there. They had come up to London two poor lads, from Devonport, where their father was a carpenter. They were both able men, but especially William.

CHAPTER XV.

1814-1817.

'Edinburgh' Reviewer—The 'ROUND TABLE'—Its origin—Mr. Hazlitt's progress towards celebrity—First domestic disappointment—The 'Characters of Shakspeare's Plays' published—The 'Round Table' published.

THERE can hardly be sounder evidence of Mr. Hazlitt's rising fame and credit in the profession which he had selected, than the fact that so early as 1814 we find him called upon by Jeffrey to give his co-operation in that quarter. The book assigned to him was Dunlop's 'History of Fiction,' and it appeared in the November number of the 'Review,' for 1814. I should be very sorry to have it supposed that I do not lay proper stress on his commencement as 'Edinburgh' Reviewer within two years after his first settlement in town as a writer for the press. His progress had indeed been gratifying to himself, and to that select circle of friends of which Lamb and his sister were the centre; and his future success might seem now to be entirely in his own hands.

I do not pretend to say, for I do not at all know, in what measure he owed to his early association with Longman and Co., in the 'Reply to Malthus,' this landmark,

as it surely was to be considered, in his literary history; but we ought to ask for very good proof before we believed that he had anybody to thank but himself. Hostile critics had done some of his later articles in the *Examiner* the honour of noticing them in reference to their *worthlessness* and *presumption*, and it cannot be too much to conjecture that these same writings helped Jeffrey largely in forming a favourable estimate of his talents as a critic, of his powers and extent of observation, of his command of language, and of his competence, in all respects, for the judicial duties of a reviewer.

It was a very encouraging indication, to say the least, of the growing esteem with which the periodical fruits of his pen were regarded, and it may be added, perhaps, without improper bias, that the class of men with which Jeffrey surrounded himself, and the rather trying qualifications indispensable to the discharge of the critical office upon the great Liberal organ in those days, make out together a pretty fair case for believing that William Hazlitt, in the second year of his professional apprenticeship to literature, enjoyed a higher standing and a wider repute than have generally, before this, been accorded to him.

With the year 1815 Mr. Hazlitt's contributions to the *Examiner* newspaper began to assume a more important aspect and tone. In the January of that year commenced a series of essays, somewhat modelled on the Queen Anne school of writing, but not intended at all in emulation of Addison and his colleagues, under the title of 'The Round Table.'

The following extract from the preface to the first collected edition discloses the nature and scope of this intended serial undertaking:—

"It was proposed," says Mr. Hazlitt, "by my friend Mr. [Leigh] Hunt, to publish a series of papers in the *Examiner*, in the manner of the early periodical essayists, the *Spectator* and *Tatler*. These papers were to be contributed by various persons on a variety of subjects; and Mr. Hunt, as the editor, was to take the characteristic or dramatic part of the work upon himself. I undertook to furnish occasional essays and criticisms; one or two other friends promised their assistance; but the essence of the work was to be miscellaneous. The next thing was to fix upon a title for it. After much doubtful consultation, that of 'The Round Table' was agreed upon as most descriptive of its nature and design.

"But our plan had been no sooner arranged and entered upon, than Buonaparte landed at Frejus, *et voilà la Table Ronde dissoute.* Our little congress was broken up as well as the great one: politics called off the attention of the editor from the Belles Lettres; and the task of continuing the work fell chiefly upon the person who was least able to give life and spirit to the original design. A want of variety in the subjects and mode of treating them is, perhaps, the least disadvantage resulting from this circumstance."

The 'Round Table,' however, notwithstanding the difficulties which threatened it at the commencement, was carried on by Mr. Hunt and Mr. Hazlitt for two years, and forty-eight numbers of it appeared in the

columns of the *Examiner* between January, 1815, and January, 1817. Of these, twelve were by Mr. Hunt, one by an anonymous pen, the remainder by my grandfather.

He was now gradually rising into notice. He seems to have permanently withdrawn from the *Morning Chronicle*, but was still retained on the *Champion* as a writer on Art and miscellaneous subjects. I trace him there during the whole of 1815, and at intervals till 1818. The third and last portion of a paper 'On the Ideal,' appeared in the columns of the *Champion*, on November 6, 1815.

Whatever loss the secession from the *Chronicle* entailed upon him was made up by the creation of new channels. He was in no danger of lying idle so long as he chose to continue putting pen to paper. In 1816 he began to write for the 'Scots Magazine,' and he remained a contributor to it for some few years. They were his lighter productions chiefly which found a market in this fresh quarter. He had not lost favour with Jeffrey by that essay on Dunlop; and he was almost entitled to consider himself on the staff of the 'Edinburgh.'

In 1815 he had two articles in the 'Edinburgh Review,' one on Madame D'Arblay's 'Wanderer,' and the other on Sismondi's 'Literature of the South of Europe.' Both were happily chosen subjects for treatment; for Madame D'Arblay's novel was readily made subservient to the design of presenting a general view of romantic literature, past and present, and sketches of

the best novelists, Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, Defoe, Cervantes, and the other favourites of his youth; while the great French work supplied a convenient and profitable outlet for the opinions and feelings which he had so long hoarded up, and which had ripened and mellowed by keeping, upon Chaucer and Spenser, the bards of Italy and Provence, and the whole poetic lore of Europe. In both these fields the critic lived his golden age over again. He was at Wem once more, reading the 'Canterbury Tales' and the 'New Héloise.'

For the February number of 1816 he prepared a review of Black's translation of Schlegel's 'Lectures on Dramatic Literature.' I confess that I do not see his hand very clearly in the paper; but, in addition to the decided opinion of the late Lord Cockburn, there is a passage in a letter from Leigh Hunt to Moore, of February, 1816, which, looking at the intimacy between Mr. Hazlitt and the Hunts, leaves very little doubt that the article is his.

The prostration of Napoleon's power at Waterloo in June of this year was, no doubt, a heavy blow to his political hopes and aspirations. It was a shock to his system, and to the cause of progress, as he took it, from which he did not quickly rally. A gentleman who knew him first at this period has represented him as "staggering" under it.

"When I first met Hazlitt, in the year 1815," says Talfourd, "he was staggering under the blow of Waterloo. The reappearance of his imperial idol on the coast of France, and his triumphant march to Paris, like

a fairy vision, had excited his admiration and sympathy to the utmost pitch; and though in many respects sturdily English in feeling, he could scarcely forgive the valour of the conquerors; and bitterly resented the captivity of the Emperor in St. Helena, which followed it, as if he had sustained a personal wrong. On this subject only he was 'eaten up with passion;' on all others he was the fairest, the most candid of reasoners. His countenance was then handsome, but marked by a painful expression; his black hair, which had curled stiffly over his temples, had scarcely received its first tints of grey; his gait was awkward; his dress was neglected; and, in the company of strangers, his bashfulness was almost painful; but when, in the society of Lamb and one or two others, he talked on his favourite themes of old English books, or old Italian pictures, no one's conversation could be more delightful."

Mr. Haydon also bears testimony, in his own fashion, to the overwhelming effect which the fortune of war in Belgium produced on Mr. Hazlitt. He asserts that it rendered him still more indifferent to his personal appearance, and led him to give the rein still more to that incautious indulgence in wine and spirits. It may have been so; but at all events out of evil came good in his case; for it was about 1815 that he resolved, in obedience to medical advice, to abstain wholly from all fermented liquors for the future; and with exceedingly few and unimportant exceptions (I only know certainly of *one*) he kept this vow rigidly to the last.

The point is a delicate one for the present writer to

handle, and it is so gracefully and graciously put by Talfourd, that I shall take leave to introduce what he says about it:—

"For some years previous to his death he observed an entire abstinence from fermented liquors, which he had once quaffed with the proper relish he had for all the good things of this life, but which he courageously resigned when he found the indulgence perilous to his health and faculties. The cheerfulness with which he made this sacrifice was one of the most amiable traits in his character. He had no censure for others, who, in the same dangers, were less wise or less resolute; nor did he think he had earned, by his own constancy, any right to intrude advice which he knew, if wanted, must be unavailing. Nor did he profess to be a convert to the general system of abstinence, which was advanced by one of his kindest and stanchest friends;* he avowed that he yielded to necessity; and instead of avoiding the sight of that which he could no longer taste, he was seldom so happy as when he sat with friends at their wine, participating the sociality of the time, and renewing his own past enjoyment in that of his companions, without regret and without envy."

The fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in France was one of those public calamities which, in Mr. Hazlitt's eyes, assumed a personal character and form. He was so bound up, heart and soul, with what he regarded as the cause of progress and liberty among the French people, that he identified

* Mr. Basil Montagu.

himself with the defeat of the emperor, and looked at it as a wrong inflicted upon himself. In the letters written by him from the Louvre, in 1802, when the First Consul was pursuing his schemes of aggrandizement and absorption with slight prospect of resistance from any of the other great powers, there were already symptoms of that leaning towards the Bonapartist side, which in the next few years developed itself into an engrossing enthusiam.

An incident occurred in the winter of the "Waterloo" year, in the heart of his own home, which had its natural tendency to soothe his spirit, and dispel the stupor into which he had fallen. It is one of which no notice has been taken, for the very good reason that the only record of it is to be met with in a private paper recently discovered.

On the 15th October, 1813, Mrs. Hazlitt had again been visited by a mischance. It was the third time that this had occurred since their marriage. But at last, on the 28th November, 1815, my grandfather had a second son born to him; he christened him John, after his brother. The little fellow lived seven months only, however, and died of the measles on the 19th June, 1816. He was laid in the burying-ground of the Broadway, Westminster.

His father felt the loss keenly, for even Mr. Haydon acknowledges that he had the good quality of being an affectionate parent. The day the child died he cut off a lock of his hair, enclosing it in a piece of paper, and writing upon it to show what it was. I have that paper and that writing now before me; my grandfather's words

are: "My dear little John's hair, cut off the day he died."

"I have never seen death but once," he says elsewhere, describing his parting glance at "his dear little John," as he lay in the last sleep; "and that was in an infant. It is years ago. The look was calm and placid, and the face was fair and firm. It was as if a waxen image had been laid out in the coffin and strewed with innocent flowers. It was not like death, but more like an image of life! No breath moved the lips, no pulse stirred, no sight or sound would enter those eyes or ears more. While I looked at it I saw no pain was there; it seemed to smile at the short pang of life which was over: but I could not bear the coffin-lid to be closed—it seemed to stifle me."

The connection of Mr. Hazlitt with the *Examiner* in, if not before, 1814, introduced him to the Hunts, Mr. John Hunt and his brother Leigh; and this connection probably was the indirect cause of Mr. Hazlitt proposing, on the publication of 'The Story of Rimini' in the year 1816, to make it the subject of a paper in the *Edinburgh Review*, which was done. *Blackwood's Magazine* took the opportunity to charge Mr. Hunt with having importuned Mr. Hazlitt to take up the book; and there is in the Correspondence a letter from the author of 'Rimini' to Jeffrey, declaring the insinuation to be completely untrue—a fact with which those who advanced it were probably almost as well acquainted as anybody else.

The article on the 'Story of Rimini' is in the June

number of the *Edinburgh Review* for 1816. To my mind it exhibits distinct traces of his early metaphysical style—cold, abstract, colourless, almost everything which his later writings were not. We miss those rich stores of illustration which, after being gathered up in a laborious youth, he scattered abroad like a spendthrift in his elder days. We miss the epigrammatic vigour and terseness which afterwards became so peculiarly his own, and in which he has had no rival, perhaps. We miss those sentences which are all pith, and those words which stand out from the page. There is too much of the old leaven of mechanical description. He improved as he went on; but his papers even in the *Edinburgh*—even those which were untampered with—are not what I should place before anybody as favourable specimens of his genius or acumen. A man of his temper wrote under a very serious disadvantage, overshadowed by an editor like Jeffrey, who made strange mosaics of some of the contributors' copy, and sent a criticism to the printer a mere amalgam, a thing of the neuter gender, a sort of *nullius filius*.

His paper on Schlegel was more agreeable to his line of reading and to the direction of his literary inquiries: for some years before the present time he had taken a deep interest in dramatic literature, more particularly in that of his own country, and had been a warm, but discreet admirer of England's arch-poet, Shakespeare. His series of criticisms on Kean's performances in the *Morning Chronicle* may be regarded as the first outward development and demonstration of that fine and

inborn faculty of analysis, which permitted him to range eventually over the entire universe of nature and art, and to see all things elementally.

I suspect that the undeniable merit of Mr. Hazlitt's articles in the newspapers of the day, especially of those in the *Chronicle* and *Examiner*, was owing in a degree to the absence of a pruning and patching hand there. He treated a subject most freely where he felt that his pen was most free.

His literary avocations, since his removal from the country in 1812, had been exclusively confined to his engagements on the press. He had not published an original book since the 'English Grammar' in 1810; for to the 'Memoirs of Holcroft,' the 'Life Everlasting,' printed after many years' delay in 1816, he stood merely in the relation of editor.

He was soon to convince the public that he had by no means exhausted what he had to say upon Shakespeare in those theatrical criticisms in the columns of the *Chronicle*, which, from their novelty, freshness, and plain-speaking, the old stagers on the paper scarcely knew at first what to make of. All through 1816, or during the best part of it, he had been busy on a work devoted to the critical examination and delineation of Shakespeare's 'Characters.' His attention may have been directed to the subject by the appearance of Schlegel in an English dress, and by the publication of a tract by Mr. Whately,* of which a second edition was printed

* 'Remarks on some of Shakespeare's Characters.' 1785. 8vo. A 3rd edition was published in 1838.

in 1808, who started with a similar design before him, but stopped short after treating two of the plays: 'Macbeth,' and 'Richard III.'

The MS., when completed, was accepted by Mr. C. H. Reynell, of 21, Piccadilly, the head of a printing establishment of old and high standing; and it was agreed that 100*l.* should be paid to the author for the entire copyright. The amount may not sound considerable; but I imagine that it was an advance upon my grandfather's receipts from his former literary enterprises. Mr. Reynell was the printer of the *Examiner*, and the intimate friend of Mr. Leigh Hunt and his brother John; and, apart from the relatively advantageous nature of the terms, Mr. Hazlitt was naturally led to an arrangement with a gentleman with whom he was thus thrown into constant intercourse.

The volume was published by Mr. Hunter, of St. Paul's Churchyard; and the author was gratified by the prompt insertion of a complimentary notice in the *Edinburgh Review*. The whole edition went off in six weeks; and yet it was a half-guinea book. A second edition was prepared, and partly sold, when the *Quarterly Review* launched one of its diatribes against the work and its author.

Taylor and Hessey told him subsequently that "they [the booksellers] had sold nearly two editions in about three months, but after the *Quarterly* review of them came out, they never sold another copy. . . . A crew of mischievous critics at Edinburgh," he adds, "having affixed the epithet of the 'Cockney School' to one or

two writers born in the metropolis, all the people in London became afraid of looking into their works, lest they too should be convicted of cockneyism."

"My book," he said to somebody else, who called upon him a year or so afterwards, "sold well—the first edition had gone off in six weeks—till that review came out. I had just prepared a second edition—such was called for—but then the *Quarterly* told the public that I was a fool and a dunce; and more, that I was an evil-disposed person; and the public, supposing Gifford * to know best, confessed it had been a great ass to be pleased where it ought not to be, and the sale completely stopped. . . . . "

The loss was the proprietor's, not his; and in those circles where a spirit of intelligence and liberality prevailed the book made its mark, and secured Mr. Hazlitt at once a position as one of the leading commentators on the genius of Shakespeare in the best and highest sense. He had even the satisfaction of receiving within a year an American edition of the 'Characters,' published at Boston; and in his eyes this was a genuine triumph, worth all the English criticism put together. The person who brought him the copy of the Boston reprint (it is before me as I write), "with the malice of a friend," was disappointed to find that my grandfather evinced no vexation at the piracy, and only thought of the swift passage of his fame across the Atlantic.

In the estimation of the 'Quarterly' Reviewer, my grandfather's offence was that, being an avowed Liberal

* Editor of the Q. R.

and Bonapartist, or, in other words, an incendiary and a traitor in league with Hunt and Co., he should have produced a work which was warmly and honestly cried up on its appearance by the general voice; and then there was this aggravation, that instead of an inscription in gold letters to a noble lord, he, our Cockney author, should have dedicated his book to a second Cockney author,* as a token of "Old Friendship and Lasting Esteem."

I have spoken of my grandfather as being a *discreet* admirer of Shakespeare; what I mean is, that he has told us in those pages not only what beauties he discerned in him, but what blemishes he thought he discerned in him also.

The present Lord Lytton has observed:—

"I confess that I am particularly pleased with a certain discriminating tone of coldness with which Hazlitt speaks of several of the characters in the 'Merchant of Venice;' to me it is a proof that his sympathy with genius does not blind the natural delicacy and fineness of his taste. For my own part, I have always, from a boy, felt the moral sentiment somewhat invaded and jarred upon by the heartless treachery with which Jessica deserts her father—her utter forgetfulness of his solitude, his infirmities, his wrongs, his passions, and his age;—and scarcely less so by the unconscious and complacent baseness of Lorenzo, pocketing the filial purloinings of the fair Jewess, who can still tarry from the arms of her lover 'to gild her-

* Charles Lamb.

self with some more ducats.' These two characters would be more worthy of Dryden than of Shakespeare, if the great poet had not 'cloaked and jewelled their deformities' by so costly and profuse a poetry."

The man whom the 'Quarterly' Reviewers began to consider of sufficient consequence to heap upon his head some of their choicest slang, would not have seemed to a stranger at a first interview a very formidable antagonist, or a very vulgar, conceited fellow. I have found a description of him from the pen of an individual who died very recently, and who was introduced to him at Lamb's this very year. The late Mr. George Daniel,* of Canonbury, characterizes him as "a pale-faced, spare man, with sharp, expressive features, and hollow, piercing eyes, who would, after his earnest and fanciful fashion, anatomize the character of Hamlet, and find in it certain points of resemblance to a peculiar class of mankind; while Coleridge, the invested monarch of other men's minds by right of supreme ability, would as stoutly contend that Hamlet was a conception unlike any other that had ever entered into the poetical heart or brain; adding that Shakespeare might possibly have sat to himself for the portrait, and from his own idiosyncrasies borrowed some of its spiritual lights and shades."

There is a three-quarter portrait of Mr. Hazlitt, in oils, painted by his brother about this time, which certainly bears out Daniel's passing sketch; you see there a person, five-and-thirty or so, thin almost to

* 'Recollections of Charles Lamb' (1863).

emaciation, and wan and worn with study, the expression earnest, with a touch of melancholy; the hair closely cropped, though not yet "powdered," and the coat buttoned up, as if he desired to shut himself up in his thoughts, and to keep the world at a distance.

John Hazlitt executed a miniature of him on ivory some years earlier—about the date of his marriage, I suppose; and it partakes of the same character very much: there is the same eager look and *dissecting* eye, the same anatomical physiognomy and outline.

In truth, Mr. Hazlitt was of a slight make, and of a dry, lean constitution; but his frame was wiry and compact, and down nearly to the close of his life, he was capable of fully his fair share of physical exertion.

The 'Quarterly' Reviewers were not satisfied when they had, in the very gentlemanly and severely professional vein which distinguished their periodical, disposed of the 'Characters of Shakespeare's Plays,' and for the time spoiled the sale. The appearance of the 'Round Table' in a collected shape in 1817, in two small duodecimo volumes, was an opportunity which they did not let slip of returning to those congenial topics—Jacobinism, the Cockney School, and the great incendiary movement on foot under the auspices of Mr. John and Mr. Leigh Hunt.

The circulation of the 'Round Table' was very inconsiderable, but whether it was influenced by the remarks on it in the 'Quarterly,' I cannot profess to decide. The book was not a mere reproduction of the series, as it had been printed in the *Examiner* at intervals

during a period extending over exactly two years (Jan. 1815—Jan. 1817), but the most promising of the papers were selected, and with these Mr. Hazlitt incorporated new ones of his own.

This, let it be observed, was the second unprovoked* attack which the Tory organ had made on Mr. Hazlitt; and, like the first, it was allowed to pass unnoticed.

* But the political writings of Mr. Hazlitt in the *Examiner*, I must conclude, especially the two articles on Southey's 'Lay of the Laureate,' on July 7 and July 14, 1816, were the *brief* which was put into the hands of the 'Quarterly' Reviewer, to make what he could of them, not of course straining at trifles.

CHAPTER XVI.

1818.

Return to Lecturing.

MR. HAZLITT'S connection for a brief period with the *Times* newspaper had led to an acquaintance between him and the commercial editor of that journal, Lamb's friend Alsager. At this time Alsager happened to be on the committee of the Surrey Institution,* and on Mr. Hazlitt intimating a sort of desire to resume the lecturing business, Alsager furnished him with a letter of introduction to the management. It was not that my grandfather had any reason to complain of his association with the press, for he continued to write in the *Examiner*, in the *Champion*, and in the *Scots Magazine;* and in January, 1818, he commenced a series of contributions to the 'Yellow Dwarf,'† a new

* In the Blackfriars Road. It was afterwards *worse* known as the "Devil's Pulpit;" and was the place where the notorious Carlile harangued his audiences. He was called, and I believe called himself, the "Devil's Chaplain."

† 'The Yellow Dwarf,' a Weekly Miscellany. Price 4*d.* The first number appeared Jan. 3, 1818, and it lasted till May 23, 1818, extending to 21 numbers.

speculation set on foot by Mr. John Hunt, who was probably indebted for the suggestion of the title to Wooller's 'Black Dwarf.' But as a lecturer he took at once higher ground; it was more in keeping with his newly-acquired dignity of 'Edinburgh' Reviewer.

Mr. Hazlitt, previously to making use of Mr. Alsager's introduction, addressed to the authorities at the Institution a formal proposal to deliver a series of eight Lectures on the English Poets, commencing with a general survey of the subject, and embracing all the principal writers and heads of schools. This offer was accepted, subject to the adjustment of certain details; and for these the lecturer was referred to the secretary and literary superintendent, Mr. P. G. Patmore. Upon him Mr. Hazlitt accordingly waited.

He had not written a line of the lectures, he informed Mr. Patmore frankly, but had *thought* of them; which put Mr. Patmore in some apprehension for the result. He suggested that a portion of the money might be paid in advance; which the secretary promised to do his best to arrange.

Mr. Patmore was not disposed to form a very auspicious estimate of his visitor, of whom he had heard unfavourable accounts; and my grandfather's manner does not seem to have prepossessed him. He found, however, that he improved on acquaintance. At all events, everything was satisfactorily arranged between the parties, and the day, or rather evening, was fixed on which the 'Lectures on the English Poets' were to commence.

On that first evening the lecturer was naturally more shy, nervous, and uneasy even than usual; but he had paid particular attention to his dress, and he looked extremely well. Once or twice his voice failed him, but he contrived to get through his task very creditably on the whole, in spite of a somewhat thin gathering of auditors not too well-behaved. And if Mr. Patmore may be believed, he did all in his power to encourage and stimulate him.

The late Mr. Justice Talfourd was, it appears, present at these lectures; and it fortunately happens that he has left to us some account of what he heard and what he saw. His testimony is very interesting and important.

He says:—

"Mr. Hazlitt delivered three courses of lectures at the Surrey Institution, to the matter of which we have repeatedly alluded—on 'The English Poets;' on 'The English Comic Writers,' and on 'The Age of Elizabeth' —before audiences with whom he had but 'an imperfect sympathy.' They consisted chiefly of Dissenters, who agreed with him in his hatred of Lord Castlereagh, but who 'loved no plays;' of Quakers, who approved him as the opponent of slavery and capital punishment, but who 'heard no music;' of citizens, devoted to the main chance, who had a hankering after 'the improvement of the mind,' but to whom his favourite doctrine of its natural disinterestedness was a riddle; of a few enemies, who came to sneer; and a few friends, who were eager to learn and to admire. The comparative insensibility

of the bulk of his audience to his finest passages sometimes provoked him to awaken their attention by points which broke the train of his discourse, after which he could make himself amends by some abrupt paradox which might set their prejudices on edge, and make them fancy they were shocked. He startled many of them at the onset, by observing that, since Jacob's Dream, 'the heavens have gone further off and become astronomical,'—a fine extravagance, which the ladies and gentlemen, who had grown astronomical themselves under the preceding lecturer, felt called on to resent as an attack on their severer studies. When he read a well-known extract from Cowper, comparing a poor cottager with Voltaire, and had pronounced the line 'A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,' they broke into a joyous shout of self-gratulation, that they were so much wiser than a wicked Frenchman. When he passed by Mrs. Hannah More with observing that 'she had written a great deal which he had never read,' a voice gave expression to the general commiseration and surprise, by calling out 'More pity for you!' They were confounded at his reading with more emphasis perhaps than discretion, Gay's epigrammatic lines on Sir Richard Blackmore, in which Scriptural persons are freely hitched into rhyme; but he went doggedly on to the end, and, by his perseverance, baffled those who, if he had acknowledged himself wrong by stopping, would have hissed him without mercy. He once had an edifying advantage over them. He was enumerating the humanities which endeared Dr. Johnson to his mind,

and, at the close of an agreeable catalogue, mentioned, as last and noblest, 'his carrying the poor victim of disease and dissipation on his back through Fleet Street,'—at which a titter arose from some, who were struck by the picture as ludicrous, and a murmur from others, who deemed the allusion unfit for ears polite. He paused for an instant, and then added in his sturdiest and most impressive manner, 'an act which realizes the parable of the Good Samaritan,' at which his moral and delicate hearers shrunk rebuked into deep silence. He was not eloquent in the true sense of the term; for his thoughts were too weighty to be moved along by the shallow stream of feeling which an evening's excitement can rouse. He wrote all his lectures, and read them as they were written; but his deep voice and earnest manner suited his matter well. He seemed to dig into his subject—and not in vain. In delivering his longer quotations, he had scarcely continuity enough for the versification of Shakspeare and Milton, 'with linked sweetness long drawn out;' but he gave Pope's brilliant satire and divine compliments, which are usually complete within the couplet, with an elegance and point which the poet himself would have felt as their highest praise."

Who was there besides Talfourd I cannot hear. Lamb was *not*. But what Talfourd has recorded is borne out by a passage in Mr. Hazlitt's writings, where he undoubtedly has his own experience in view:—

"Suppose you are about to give lectures at a public

institution, these friends and well-wishers hope 'you'll be turned out'—if you preserve your principles, 'they are sure you will.' Is it that your consistency gives them concern? No, but they are uneasy at your gaining a chance of a little popularity—they do not like to see this new feather in your cap; they wish to see it struck out, for the sake of your character."

"I well remember," says Mr. Patmore, "after the successful delivery of his first lecture on the 'Comic Writers' ['English Poets'], my walking home with Hazlitt from the institution to his house in Westminster. . . . . I remember he declined my proffered arm at first—which I interpreted as an evidence of his excessive modesty. I pressed it, however, and he then took it—but as if it had been a bar of hot iron—holding it *gingerly* with the tips of his fingers, much after the fashion in which he used to shake hands with those friends who were inadvertent or absent enough to proffer that ceremony."*

This course was afterwards published in an octavo volume by Taylor and Hessey (1819). Mr. Patmore states that they gave a handsome sum for the copyright, but he does not tell us what it was. He is, as a rule, mysterious in the wrong place, and *tells tales out of school.* Two negatives do not make an affirmative in this case.

The lectures were favourably criticised in 'Blackwood's Magazine' by Mr. Patmore, and Mr. Hazlitt was

* The late Mr. Leigh Hunt used to say that shaking my grandfather's hand was like shaking the fin of a fish!

highly pleased. It enabled him to breathe more freely; it was a slight respite from fighting; and Mr. Blackwood making a velvet paw was a not disagreeable novelty. I am writing of a transaction in English literature, it should be borne in mind, which took place a generation ago. Mr. Patmore records that his new acquaintance spoke to him of this as the best *job* he had had to do with yet; and Mr. Patmore apparently considered that it was regarding the matter from a too sordid point of view. What if he had known that Mr. Hazlitt would have preferred infinitely *thinking* on about those lectures to delivering them first, and then chaffering for them with the booksellers! But thought does not yield drachmæ, and there was cry of no corn in Egypt. The thing had to be done, and it *was* done.

Mr. Patmore had paid Mr. Hazlitt the civility of sending him his article on the lectures for 'Blackwood' in MS., before he let it pass from his hands. It was returned to the writer with the following note of thanks:—

"DEAR SIR,

"I am very well satisfied with the article, and obliged to you for it. I am afraid the censure is truer than the praise. It will be of great service, if they insert it entire, which, however, I hope.

"Your obliged,

"W. HAZLITT."

This was the most profitable and satisfactory year he

had yet had. Besides his numerous and steady contributions to the press, there were his lectures, for which he was being paid twice over; and in the 'Edinburgh Review' for December appeared a paper on Walpole's 'Letters' from his pen. The criticism in the 'Review' for 1817 on Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* was also his; it has been improperly claimed for Jeffrey.

He had parted with his interest in the 'Characters of Shakespeare's Plays' to Mr. Reynell;* and the second edition of that work brought nothing to him, nor much to anybody else. It was published in a full-sized octavo, like its predecessor, the price ten-and-sixpence.

Among his articles in the 'Scots Magazine' was one (in the number for February) 'On the Question whether Pope was a Poet?' In the 'Champion' for June 16, 1818, he had a criticism on West's picture of Christ Crucified.

His share in Mr. Hunt's 'Yellow Dwarf' was considerable. He wrote for it as many as fifteen articles, among which were those 'On the Clerical Character,' 'On Court Influence,' 'On the Regal Character,' 'What is the People?' 'On the Opera,' 'The Fudge Family in Paris,' and 'An Examination of Mr. Malthus's Doctrines.' Mr. Hazlitt's copy of the 'Yellow Dwarf' is before me; and from his autograph corrections in the

* Of whom the copyright was subsequently repurchased by my father.

'Case of Mr. Hone,' and his well-known interest in that deserving and unfortunate gentleman, I should be disposed, in the absence of any other claimant, to give that to him too. The criticism on 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' is much in his manner. I perceive that he procured the insertion of three extracts from his 'Lectures on the Poets' in this ephemeral publication.

The 'English Poets' were followed by the 'Comic Writers' and the 'Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.' So that, although Mr. Hazlitt had only *thought* of the first series when he first saw the secretary of the Institution, it was sufficiently well received and approved of by the committee, to lead to his services being secured for a second and third. The 'Comic Writers' form a volume published (also by Taylor and Hessey) in 1819.

Mr. Hazlitt now acceded to Mr. Hone's proposition for collecting his scattered political writings from the columns of the *Morning Chronicle* and other journals; and their appearance this year in an octavo volume, under the title of 'Political Essays,' showed that here was an incorrigible Jacobin indeed, and that something must be done in good earnest to crush his impertinent and troublesome ambition.

He had dedicated his 'Characters of Shakespeare's Plays' to Lamb; he dedicated his 'Political Essays' to Mr. John Hunt, one of the worthiest and most upright of men. But this time the treasure was not in the dedication so much as in the preface, which ran to some

length, and was intended to be a sort of exposition of the writer's creed and opinions.

"I am no politician," he starts by saying, "and still less can I be said to be a party-man; but I have a hatred for tyranny, and a contempt for its tools; and this feeling I have expressed as often and as strongly as I could. . . . . The question with me is, whether I and all mankind are born slaves or free. That is the one thing necessary to know and to make good: the rest is *flocci, nauci, nihili, pili.*"

It was, of course, not to be expected that a person who could have the boldness to fling such words as these in the teeth of the Tories should be treated like a gentleman; and the 'Quarterly' showed a proper sense of the outrage on its friends by a very lavish abuse in its pages of the Lectures on the Poets and the Comic Writers. The pamphlet which had been published in 1806, under the title of 'Free Thoughts on Public Affairs,' was certainly one of those which may be regarded as having assisted and encouraged the establishment of the 'Quarterly Review' in 1808. We have only to look through the correspondence of the period to understand very clearly that, before it was many years old, the 'Edinburgh' had begun to excite apprehensions and animosity among the Tories.

Scott, in a letter to George Ellis, of Nov. 2, 1808, observes: "I had most strongly recommended to our Lord Advocate to think of some counter-measures against the 'Edinburgh Review,' which, politically speaking, is doing incalculable damage [! !]." It

seems that there was a fear lest there should be some difficulty in getting contributors; but Sir Walter reassures Mr. Ellis on this score: "Have we not yourself and your cousin," he puts to him, "the Roses, Malthus, Matthias, Gifford, Heber, and his brother? *Can I not procure you a score of blue-caps, who would rather write for us than for the 'Edinburgh Review,' if they got as much pay by it?*"* The italics are my own. Mr. Hazlitt ought to have seen this passage; but in truth he did not require anything to add to his contempt for Scott as a politician.

So it happened that, in 1808, John Murray, "a young bookseller of capital and enterprise," was encouraged to embark in a new speculation, as a *counter-measure;* and the 'Quarterly Review' was started under the editorship of Mr. W. Gifford.

But Southey *lets the cat out of the bag* completely in a letter to Lieutenant Southey, of November 12, 1808. The italics are mine:—

"A few days ago came a letter from [Grosvenor] Bedford, communicating to me the, as yet secret, intelligence that it is thought expedient to set on foot a review, for the purpose of counteracting *the base and cowardly politics* of the 'Edinburgh.' Walter Scott, it

* See, too, a letter on the subject, too long to quote here, from Rogers to Moore of Jan. 29, 1809; it is printed in Lord Russell's edition in 8 volumes. Malthus was the author of the 'Essay on Population;' Matthias, of the 'Pursuits of Literature.' "Heber and his brother" were Reginald Heber, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, and Richard Heber, Esq., M.P., the great book-collector.

seems, was the suggestor *to some of the men in power.* Gifford (the Baviad and Massinger Gifford) is to be editor, and he commissioned Bedford to apply to me. The pay will be as high as the 'Edinburgh,' *and such political information as is necessary will be communicated from official sources—for,* IN PLAIN ENGLISH, THE MINISTERS SET IT UP. *But they wish it not to wear a party appearance.*"

This comes, then, to what Mr. Hazlitt said about the whole thing. Presently, however, that is, after the review had been going on a little while, the same writer, in a letter to his friend May, of May 23, 1809, has to observe:—

"I am afraid, however, that this review is *too much* under the immediate influence of the ministry. One of the publishers was here last week. He expressed a hope that 'they would let the Duke of York alone,' which implied a fear that it was intended to defend him; and he said also that 'George Ellis' (who wrote that wretched article about Spain which begins the first number) 'and some other of its privy council, talked of *unmuzzling Gifford,' that is, of letting him set up the old cry of Jacobinism against all who wish for reform.*"

Perhaps, if the 'Quarterly Review' had merely taken up in this hostile and cowardly spirit the 'Round Table,' Mr. Hazlitt might not have determined to retort; but similar attacks, equally deficient in common sense, common honesty, and common logic, were made on the 'Characters of Shakespeare's Plays, and on the 'Lectures

on the English Poets.' This provoked him into his answer, and a most unanswerable answer it was!

When I have looked at 'A Letter to William Gifford, Esq., from William Hazlitt, Esq.'* sometimes as a confession of literary and political faith, and as a key to the writer's motives, I have been tempted to reproduce it entire from his own copy corrected for a second edition; but I shall merely bring forward, here at all events, those passages which have a personal bearing, and illustrate Mr. Hazlitt's history and publications.

"As an instance," he says to him, "of the summary manner in which you dispose of any author who is not to your taste, you began your account of the first work of mine you thought proper to notice (the 'Round Table') with a paltry and deliberate falsehood. . . . . The charges which you brought against me as the writer of that work, were chiefly these four: 1. That I pretended to have written a work in the manner of the 'Spectator;' I answer, this is a falsehood. The advertisement to that work is written expressly to disclaim any such idea, and to apologise for the work having fallen short of the original intention of the projector (Mr. Leigh Hunt), from its execution having devolved almost entirely on me, who had undertaken merely to furnish a set of essays and criticisms, which essays and criticisms were here collected together. 2. That I was not only a professed imitator of Addison, but a great coiner of new words and phrases; I answer, this is also a deliberate and

* 1819, 8vo. The full title and description will be found in the Chronological Catalogue of the Works.

contemptible falsehood. You have filled a paragraph with a catalogue of these new words and phrases, which you attribute to me, and single out as the particular characteristics of my style, not any one of which I have used. This you knew. 3. You say, I write eternally about washerwomen. I answer, no such thing. There is indeed one paper in the 'Round Table' on this subject, and I think a very agreeable one. I may say so, for it is not my writing. 4. You say that 'I praise my own chivalrous eloquence;' and I answer, that's a falsehood; and that you knew I had not applied these words to myself, because you knew that it was not I who had used them. [They occurred in an article written by Mr. Leigh Hunt.]

"The last paragraph of the article in question is true; for, as if to obviate the detection of this tissue of little, lying, loyal, catch-penny frauds, it contains a cunning, tacit acknowledgment of them; but says, with equal candour and modesty, that it is not the business of the writer to distinguish (in such trifling cases) between truth and falsehood. That may be; but I cannot think that for the editor of the 'Quarterly Review' to want common veracity is any disgrace to me. . . . .

"You do not like the subjects of my essays in general. You complain in particular of 'my eager vituperation of good-nature and good-natured people;' and yet with this you have, as I should take it, nought to do; you object to my sweeping abuse of poets as (with the exception of Milton) dishonest men, with which you have

as little to do; you are no poet, and, of course, honest! You do not like my abuse of the Scotch, at which the Irish were delighted, nor my abuse of the Irish, at which the Scotch were not displeased, nor my abuse of the English, which I can understand; but I wonder you should not like my abuse of the French. You say indeed that 'no abuse which is directed' against whole classes of men is of much importance,' and yet you and your anti-Jacobin friends have been living upon this sort of abuse for the last twenty years. . . . .

"I confess, sir, the 'Round Table' did not take. 'It was *caviare* to the multitude;' but the reason, I think, was not that the abuse in it was undeserved, but that I have there spoken the truth of too many persons and things. In writing it, I preferred the true to the agreeable, which I find to be an unpardonable fault. . . . . My object in writing it was to set down such observations as had occurred to me from time to time on different subjects. . . . . I wished to make a sort of *Liber Veritatis*, a set of studies from human life. As my object was not to flatter, neither was it to offend or contradict others, but to state my own feelings or opinions such as they really were, but more particularly, of course, where this had not been done before, and where I thought I could throw any new light on a subject. In doing so I endeavoured to fix my attention only on the thing I was writing about, and which had struck me in some particular manner, which I wished to point out to others, with the best reasons or explanations I could give. . . . . I did not try to think with

the multitude, nor to differ with them, but to think for myself. . . . . I wrote to the public with the sam sincerity and want of disguise as if I had been making a register of my private thoughts; and this has been construed by some into a breach of decorum. The affectation I have been accused of was merely my sometimes stating a thing in an extreme point of view for fear of not being understood; and my love of paradox may, I think, be accounted for from the necessity of counteracting the obstinacy of prejudice. If I have been led to carry a remark too far, it was because others would not allow it to have any force at all. . . . .

"I wrote, for instance, an 'Essay on Pedantry,' to qualify the extreme contempt into which it has fallen, and to show the necessary advantages of an absorption of the whole mind in some favourite study; and I wrote an 'Essay on the Ignorance of the Learned' to lessen the undue admiration of learning, and to show that it is not everything. I gained very few converts to either of these opinions. . . . .

"You make no mention of my character of Rousseau, or of the papers on 'Actors and Acting.' You also forget my praise of John Buncle.

"As to my style, I thought little about it. I only used the word which seemed to me to signify the idea I wanted to convey, and I did not rest till I had got it. In seeking for truth I sometimes found beauty.

"As to the facility of which you, sir, and others ac-

cuse me, it has not been acquired at once nor without pains. I was eight years in writing eight pages, under circumstances of inconceivable and ridiculous discouragement. As to my figurative and gaudy phraseology, you reproach me with it because you never heard of what I had written in my first dry manner. I afterwards found a popular mode of writing necessary to convey subtle and difficult trains of reasoning. . . . . You in vain endeavour to account for the popularity of some of my writings from the trick of arranging words in a variety of forms without any correspondent ideas, like the newly-invented optical toy. You have not hit upon the secret, nor will you be able to avail yourself of it when I tell you. It is the old story—*that I think what I please, and say what I think.* . . . .

"It has been my business all my life to get at the truth as well as I could, merely to satisfy my own mind. . . . .

"Early in life I made (what I thought) a metaphysical discovery; and after that it was too late to think of retracting. My pride forbade it; my understanding revolted at it. I could not do better than go on as I had begun. I, too, worshipped at no unhallowed shrine, and served in no mean presence. I had laid my hand on the ark, and could not turn back."

Leigh Hunt, in a letter to Shelley, 4th August, 1819, says of this:—"Hazlitt has written a masterly character of Gifford, much more coolly done than these things of his in general; and this single circumstance shows what

sort of feelings the poor creature generates. I have noticed him only in passing, truly and unaffectedly feeling too much scorn." But Mr. Hunt noticed him in a more direct and telling manner afterwards in his 'Ultra-crepidarius,' as though conquering this scorn.

Mr. Gifford is permanently forgotten, and with him I should like to see buried for ever the memory of his controversy (if it may be so called) with my grandfather. On Mr. Gifford's part it was a malignant, base, and dastardly persecution. My grandfather's offence was that he was a Reformer; in the eyes of Mr. Gifford and his paymasters, a Reformer was a Jacobin, a cutthroat, a blackguard, anything and everything. The laws of the country just precluded them from burning such horrible persons alive, or beheading them, or throwing them for their remaining days into some pleasant dungeon, but they did the next best thing; they used all their efforts to hunt them down, to torture them out of life.

Mr. Hazlitt himself says:—

"An old friend of mine, when he read the abuse poured out in certain Tory publications, used to congratulate himself upon it as a favourable sign of the times and of the progressive improvement of our manners. Where we now called names we formerly burnt each other at a stake.

"To have all the world against us is trying to a man's temper and philosophy. It unhinges even our opinion of our own motives and intentions. It is like striking the actual world from under our feet: the void

that is left, the death-like pause, the chilling suspense, is fearful. The growth of an opinion is like the growth of a limb; it receives its actual support and nourishment from the general body of the opinions, feelings, and practice of the world; without that it soon withers, festers, and becomes useless. To what purpose write a good book if it is sure to be pronounced a bad one, even before it is read?"

"When the editor of a respectable morning paper reproached me with having called Mr. Gifford a cat's paw, I did not tell him that he was a glove upon that cat's paw. I might have done so." The expression occurs near the beginning of the letter to Gifford; and for the convenience of those who do not possess the pamphlet, I shall quote the passage:—"You are a little person, but a considerable cat's paw, and so far worthy of notice. Your clandestine connection with persons high in office constantly influences your opinions, and alone gives importance to them. You are the Government critic, a character nicely differing from that of a Government spy—the invisible link that connects literature with the police."

The dread of the 'Quarterly' and other Tory organs haunted him even in his lodgings. The gentleman on the first floor took in one of these papers, in which something he had written or done was reviled in the usual terms. The landlord being told of it, brings up Mr. Hazlitt's account, and desires settlement, preferring not to take a note-of-hand in part-payment. Mr. Hazlitt speaks to the daughter of the house, who re-

marks, that "indeed her father has been almost ruined by bills."

The following letters refer to a 50*l.* bill, which Mr. John Hunt appears to have accepted, and about which there had been some misunderstanding. Mr. Hunt was then residing at Taunton:—

"DEAR SIR,

"I have just received a letter from Henry, in which he states that Messrs. Rees and Eaton have sent to him, threatening immediate legal proceedings against me, unless the 50*l.* bill be taken up. I have replied to him, desiring him to send them a note, telling them I have written to you on the business; and as they will certainly be paid, I trust they will not think of putting us to any legal expenses. I hope you will be able to satisfy them in some way, as any legal assault on me here, on the ground of debt, would be very unpleasant for various reasons, which you can very well imagine.

"I take it for granted that you are at Winterslow Hut, as Henry says you have left town, so I direct thither.

"You would gratify me much by coming over here. We have a bed at your service, a beautiful country to exercise in, and we would do our best to make you comfortable, not forgetting a total banishment of *veal* and *pork* from our table. Our beef and mutton are as good as that in London. You can have my little parlour to write in, which is a snug place for the purpose, being hung round with prints after Raphael,

Titian, Correggio, and Claude, and looking over a piece of grass into a fine orchard, through a latticed window. What more is needful for a tasteful Jacobin? that is, if he be not immoderate in his desires. Come and try how you like it.*

"There are plenty of conveyances from Salisbury to Taunton. My cottage is at Up-Chaddon, nearly three miles north of Taunton, a pleasant walk, on the road to Hestercombe. Any one will direct you to the hamlet, when you reach Taunton. I rather expect Mr. Coulson here in a few days, on his way from Cornwall, but I have heard nothing of him for some time back.

"Ever yours truly,
"JOHN HUNT."

"Wednesday, Sept. 15, 1819."

"York Buildings, New Road.
"22nd Sept., 1819.

"DEAR SIR,

"*Nunc scio quid sit majestas.* I do not allude to Mrs. Tomlinson,† though she certainly ought to be called Caroline, but to large handwriting,‡ of which I know you are fond. It enables me to write a long letter of three sentences. However, your Brobdingnagians are as pleasant as those at Covent Garden; and

* I collect from a passage in one of the essays of W. H., that he accepted Mr. Hunt's invitation, and crossed over to Taunton.

† The landlady at York Street, already referred to.

‡ Mr. Hazlitt usually wrote a very large, copper-plate hand, and to this Mr. Hunt alludes jocosely.

so with considerable effort I beget a similar progeny to send my answer by. Your letter dated Saturday I did not receive till yesterday; and to day I saw Mr. Procter. He tells me that he had written me a letter enclosing the bill, and intrusted it to a friend, who kept it in his pocket for three or four days; upon which he enclosed it in another letter to you, directed to Southampton Buildings. Shall I call there for it? or what else shall I do? all that I can do I will: and your belief of this gives me great refreshment on these rascally occasions, though no more than I desire. I am glad to hear that you have broken the neck of the Elizabethan poets, and wished you could have knocked Lord Burleigh on the head, by the way, in good earnest. As to Winterslow, it is hopeless to me just now, who have a wife just ready to be brought to bed, and literary births of my own without end. But I thank you most heartily for asking me.

"Most sincerely,

"LEIGH HUNT."

"To William Hazlitt, Esq.,

"Winterslow Hut, near Salisbury."

CHAPTER XVII.

1820.

Third Course of Lectures at the Surrey Institution—The 'London Magazine'—Death of the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt.

THE third series of lectures at the Surrey Institution was delivered in the spring of 1820. The ground taken up by this new course was the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth; and the subject, as arranged for treatment by Mr. Hazlitt, formed eight rather considerable sections.

He was not so nervous as he had been on the two prior occasions; but a person who was present tells me that he hitched up his knee-breeches continually in a very distressing manner, for they kept slipping over his hips through the want of braces, and disclosing bits of shirt. The same eyewitness has ringing in his ear, after forty-seven years, the burden of the song in 'Gammer Gurton's Needle'—

Jolly good ale and old.

And he says that when the lecturer came to the last

word he dwelt upon it, till it seemed to vibrate in the air, after it had left his lips, thus—

Jolly good ale and OLD.

The lectures form an octavo volume, which was published the same year. In the advertisement prefixed to it, the author observes, "By the age of Elizabeth (as it relates to the history of our literature) I would be understood to mean the time from the Reformation to the end of Charles I., including the writers of a certain school or style of poetry or prose, who flourished together, or immediately succeeded one another within this period."

This explanation may be serviceable and not wholly superfluous, as the title of the lectures, both as spoken and printed, implies a less extended range of inquiry, and does not adequately describe a survey embracing several of the prose writers of Elizabeth's day and most of the Caroline series.

There is a review of this concluding series, with extracts, in the first volume of the *London Magazine* a new periodical now launched by Messrs. Taylor and Hessey.

A very notable event it was in the literary career of Mr. Hazlitt, as in that of Lamb and others, the establishment, in the year 1820, of this new organ, under the editorship of Mr. John Scott, formerly editor of the *Champion*. The services of some of the best living writers were secured upon liberal terms. There was Darley, Cory, De Quincey, Wainwright, Reynolds,

and more besides. My grandfather and Lamb undertook to furnish essays from time to time. My grandfather's were to be christened 'Table Talk;' Lamb proposed to write, under the pseudonym of 'Elia,' papers on what were to him familiar and favourite themes. Talfourd states that Lamb was indebted to my grandfather for his first introduction to the new serial, and adds that "it supplied the finest stimulus his intellect had ever received."

To Mr. Hazlitt no channel could have been more valuable and welcome; and I date from its commencement his first genuine success as a *popular* writer. Under one of the most admirable men who ever occupied the editorial chair, he saw the way open to him at length of wielding his pen without constraint, and to very substantial purpose. Now his opportunity had come, it seemed, of pouring out without stint or hinderance the wealth of a capacious and prodigally-stored mind, and of treating the subjects which occurred to him "with freedom and with power."*

During the last six or seven years, Mr. Hazlitt had been a prominent contributor to the newspapers and to the *Edinburgh Review*. Some of the most attractive papers in the latter are indeed—though I may be suspected of partiality, and charged with presumption, for saying so much—those which he supplied upon Dunlop, D'Arblay, Sismondi, Schlegel, and Walpole; and his industry and energy were commensurate with

* This is his own expression, but he did not make use of it till some years later.

his unquestioned abilities. For such a writer the path to fortune was surely easy and smooth enough. For such a *writer* it might have been.

He had been at Winterslow when the two Hunts wrote to him in September, 1819. He had begun to spend a good deal of his time there, not at the old house in the village, but at the *Hut*, a coaching inn on the border of Salisbury Plain.

The fact is, that the small property bequeathed by Lieutenant Stoddart to his daughter had been sold some years after Miss Stoddart's marriage, and the money was handed over to Dr. Stoddart, her brother, in consideration of an annuity, rather exceeding in amount the sum which Mrs. Hazlitt would have realized by the ordinary rate of interest.

My grandfather was again at the Hut, when the news came to him of the death of the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt, at Crediton, in Devonshire. He had removed from Wem to Addleston, in Surrey, in 1813, from Addleston to Bath, and finally to Crediton, where he was to yield up his life. There he spent, in humble retirement and obscure monotony, the last few years of a long and honourable career. There had been scarcely anything in the whole weary time—not weary, perhaps, however, to him—to vary the sameness and dulness of a village existence. A friend now and then stayed at the house; Mrs. Hazlitt visited them sometimes. But no such incident ever brightened his path again as that which is painted to the life in 'My First Acquaintance with Poets.' No Samuel Taylor Coleridge dined on

mutton and turnips under that roof before or after 1798.

Winswood, the house in which he lived, was a commodious, rambling place of the old-fashioned stamp, with a good garden, and more than sufficient accommodation for his small circle. The rent was 24*l.* a year only, but this taxed quite severely enough his modest resources.

The family did not know at first where to address my grandfather—he was a very bad correspondent—and I conceive it to be extremely possible that, since his removal from home, he never traced a line to his father, or mother, or sister. Then, which is equally strange, he never held any epistolary communication, if he could help it, with wife, son, or publisher; and friends of thirty years' standing were without a scrap of his handwriting. It was an idiosyncrasy.

He lost his father on the 16th July, 1820: the venerable old man was in the eighty-fourth year of his age. It was not till Mrs. Hazlitt, my grandmother, arrived at Winswood on the night of the 27th, that William's address could be ascertained, so that he might be apprized of the circumstances. The widow was too weak and poorly to write, and his sister Peggy wrote for her. I shall give the letter, which, by some miracle, has escaped the fate of most things of the same kind :—

"DEAR WILLIAM,

"Sarah came here with the two boys* last night, as they could get no conveyance from Exeter to Crediton, and are gone there to-day. Harriet† is gone there with them, and will be back with Sarah in the evening: let Mrs. Armstead know they are come safe and well, If we had known where to direct to you, we should not have sent Mary‡ to tell you of our father's death, but would have written to you directly; but neither your mother nor I were well enough to write at the time, and we thought Sarah might be on the road, and have been expecting her every night since. Your father's death was unexpected at last; for though we had been at one time doubtful of his living through the week, Mr. Nosworthy thought him much better on Saturday morning. He died on Sunday the 16th, about seven in the morning. To him his death was a release from a state of suffering: he made no complaint, nor did he give one groan, but went on talking of glory, honour, and immortality, and talking with me to the last. His senses returned the last few hours, and when he could not speak, he took my hand and put it into mother's. He kept his bed but one day, and his appetite was very good; but he had water on his chest, and that we did not know for a long time, and we thought he might have lived many months longer. My mother is very

* Mrs. Armstead's children. Mrs. A. was one of the residents at Winterslow. More of her, by-and-by.

† John Hazlitt's eldest daughter.

‡ John Hazlitt's second daughter.

weak and ill; it will be a long time before she recovers the distress and fatigue she has gone through. I am afraid I have not written very clearly, as my head is so confused for want of sleep. The habit of watching for so long a time prevents my sleeping now. I hope I shall get better soon, and be able to eat more than I do at present. Harriet had a letter from her father this week; he still talks of going to Glasgow, but is not yet gone; her mother and the children are at Portsmouth; what she intends or can do I can't think. Harriet had three letters from Barbadoes* last week. Mr. Stewart† talks of being here in about six weeks.

"My mother wishes to know if you intend to write anything in the 'Repository,' giving some account of your father? If you don't, somebody else will, and you can do it best. Mr. Hinton‡ was asking about it, and wished to know if he could do anything for us in any way. The people here have been very kind in doing and ordering everything for us that we could not see about ourselves. Sarah intended to write some in this letter, but she will not be back time enough. We wish her to stay a week or two with us now she is here. We have got a bed to spare for you now whenever you like to come. I hope you will write to us soon: my mother wishes to hear from you, and know how you

* Where her brother William, John Hazlitt's only son, had settled.

† Who afterwards married Harriet Hazlitt.

‡ The Rev. G. P. Hinton, already mentioned. Mr. Hinton, and not Mr. Hazlitt, prepared the memoir, and sent it to the 'Repository.' See vol. xv. p. 677–9.

are. We all unite in love to you. I have no more to say, but farewell, and may God bless you.

"I am your affectionate sister,

"P. HAZLITT.

"Crediton, July 28th [1820].

[Endorsed.] "W. Hazlitt, Esq.,

"At the Hut, Winterslow, near Salisbury."

Whether he wrote, as he was asked here to do, or not, I cannot say; there is no trace of any letter of his among the papers on the present or any other occasion. But in a passage of the essay 'On the Fear of Death,' which does not occur in the printed copy, he says, "I did not see my father after he was dead; but I saw death shake him by the palsied hand, and stare him in the face. He made as good an end as Falstaff, though different, as became him. After repeating the name of his Redeemer often, he took my mother's hand, and looking up, put it in my sister's, and so expired. There was a something graceful and gracious in his nature, which showed itself in his last act. . . . ."

It must have been about the same time that Mrs. Hazlitt lost her mother, old Mrs. Loftus, of Wisbeach, who lived to be ninety-nine, and had her portrait painted at ninety-six by John Hazlitt. Mrs. Loftus lived latterly at Peterborough, where she sat for her picture, and where she died.

In a paper on the *Clerical Character* in the 'Yellow Dwarf' of January 10, 1818, he had had his father in view, and generalized from him in these terms:—

"A dissenting minister is a character not so easily to

be dispensed with, and whose place cannot well be supplied. It is the fault of sectarianism that it tends to scepticism. . . . . It is a pity that this character has worn itself out, that that pulse of thought and feeling has ceased almost to beat in the heart of a nation. . . . But we have known some such in happier days, who had been brought up and bred from youth to age in the one constant belief of God and of his Christ, and who thought all other things but dross compared with the glory hereafter to be revealed. Their youthful hopes and vanity had been mortified in them, even in their boyish days, by the neglect and supercilious regards of the world; and they turned to look into their own minds for something else to build their hopes and confidence upon. They were true priests. They set up an image in their own minds—it was truth: they worshipped an idol there—it was justice. They looked on man as their brother, and only bowed the knee to the Highest. Separate from the world, they walked humbly with their God, and lived in thought with those who had borne testimony of a good conscience with the spirits of just men in all ages. They saw Moses when he slew the Egyptian, and the prophets who overturned the brazen images, and those who were stoned and sawn asunder. They were with Daniel in the lions' den, and with the three children who passed through the fiery furnace, Meshech, Shadrach, and Abednego; they did not crucify Christ twice over, or deny him in their hearts, with St. Peter; the 'Book of Martyrs' was open to them; they read the story of

William Tell, of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, and the old one-eyed Zisca; they had Neale's 'History of the Puritans' by heart, and Calamy's 'Account of the Two Thousand Ejected Ministers,' and gave it to their children to read, with the pictures of the polemical Baxter, the silver-tongued Bates, the mild-looking Calamy, and old honest Howe; they believed in Lardner's 'Credibility of the Gospel History;' they were deep-read in the works of the *Fratres Poloni*, Pripscovius, Crellius, Cracovius, who sought out truth in texts of Scripture, and grew blind over Hebrew points; their aspiration after liberty was a sigh uttered from the towers, 'time-rent,' of the Holy Inquisition; and their zeal for religious toleration was kindled at the fires of Smithfield. Their sympathy was not with the oppressors, but the oppressed. They cherished in their thoughts—and wished to transmit to their posterity—those rights and privileges for asserting which their ancestors had bled on scaffolds, or had pined in dungeons or in foreign climes. Their creed, too, was 'Glory to God, peace on earth, good-will to man.' This creed, since profaned and rendered vile, they kept fast through good report and evil report. This belief they had, that looks at something out of itself, fixed as the stars, deep as the firmament; that makes of its own heart an altar to truth, a place of worship for what is right, at which it does reverence with praise and prayer like a holy thing, apart and content; and feels that the greatest being in the universe is always near it, and that all things work together for the good of his creatures

under his guiding hand. This covenant they kept, as the stars keep their courses; this principle they stuck by, for want of knowing better, as it sticks by them to the last. It grew with their growth, it does not wither in their decay. It lives when the almond-tree flourishes, and is not bowed down with the tottering knees. It glimmers with the last feeble eyesight, smiles in the faded cheek like infancy, and lights a path before them to the grave! This is better than the life of a whirligig court poet."

The Rev. Mr. Hazlitt left behind him four* volumes of sermons, excellent alike in matter and style, and also several separate discourses. Some of these appeared in the 'Monthly Repository,' under the pseudonyms of "Rationalis" or "Philalethes," and one was published at Philadelphia, in 1783, 8vo. He was a correspondent of Dr. Priestley; and the editor of 'Priestley's Life and Letters' prints a letter from Dr. P. to Dr. Price, in which the former quotes a passage† from one he had received from the Rev. Mr. H.

* 1. A Thanksgiving Sermon [on Psalm cvii., 8]. Boston, U.S., 1786. 8vo.

2. Discourses [x.] for the use of Families, on the advantages of a Free Inquiry, and on the Study of the Scriptures. By W. Hazlitt, M.A. London, 1790. 8vo.

3. Sermons for the use of Families. By W. Hazlitt, A.M. London, 1808. 8vo. 2 vols.

† "You may assure him [Archdeacon ——] from me, if you will, that my intelligence came neither directly nor indirectly from you. I had it first from a gentleman in the west, and afterwards from many others; so many others, that I supposed it to be universally known."

But the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt was not a mere biblical student. He was versed in the writings of men like his friend Priestley, from whom he had the pleasure of receiving copies of every work, as it was published, from his pen. He had also a better acquaintance than has been suspected with general literature; and no better illustration of his catholic taste and of his rare benevolence of disposition can be desired than a letter I purpose to give, addressed by him to the 'Monthly Repository in 1808, respecting the author of the 'Sentimental Journey:'—

"*To the Editor of the 'Monthly Repository.'*

"Wem, Shropshire,
[July, 1808.]

"SIR,

"I am not so much surprised as probably some of your readers at the mortifying account which has been published in your work (p. 9) of the brutality of Sterne to his mother. For, above forty years ago, as I was travelling in a coach from Bath to London, my companion, a Dr. Marriot, who was his near neighbour, gave me such a character of the man as filled me with unfavourable impressions of him ever since. Being then a young man, and, like most other young men, being too forward to show my opinion of men and books, I began to express my high admiration of the writings of Sterne, and to pass unqualified eulogiums upon him, as a man possessed of the finest feelings and philanthropy.

"As soon as I had ended my frothy declamation, the Doctor very placidly told me that I did not know the man as well as he did; that he was his very near neigh-

bour; and that of all the men he ever knew he was the most devoid of the feelings of humanity, or of everything that we call sympathy.

"As one proof of this, the Doctor told me that his daughter had some acquaintance with Miss Sterne, and therefore that she frequently passed an afternoon at his house; that Miss Sterne was subject to violent epileptic fits; that she had been lately seized with one of these, which was accompanied with such alarming symptoms, as made him and his daughter apprehend that she was dying; that they therefore sent to Mr. Sterne to apprize him of the circumstance, and to come to them immediately.

"After waiting for some time in anxious expectation, the gentleman made his appearance, and seeing his daughter agonized upon the floor, and seemingly ready to expire, he coolly observed that she would be well again presently, and that he could not stop a moment, being engaged to play the first fiddle at York that night. Thus he took his leave, and hastily hurried out of the house.

"We cannot therefore conclude with any certainty what a man feels from the pathos of his writings, unless we have an intimate acquaintance with the man himself; unless we can prove from his actions that his high-wrought descriptions are the index of his mind. It is even possible, as the philosopher Moies asserted, that a man of no feeling may succeed best in giving us a finished picture of distress.

"How is this to be accounted for, unless it be, that because they have no interest in what they deliver, they are not hurried on by any real passion—they take

time to dress it to the popular taste, by ornamenting it with all the nick-nackery which it will bear?

"The man, however, who feels and suffers in a high degree, must express himself strongly on a subject which affects him, though he does not go out of his way to introduce any artful embellishment.

"I intended to have attempted an explanation of this, but rather wish to have this done by some of your ingenious correspondents. I shall only observe, that notwithstanding all the admiration which Sterne's 'Maria' has produced, he could not, to save his life, have written anything equal to David's lamentation over Absalom. He would, like Dr. Swift, if in his situation, have been proud and witty, even when deploring the death of his lovely Stella.

"W. HAZLITT."

This letter is to my mind admirable, and almost good enough for the author of 'Table Talk.'

I could relate some singular tales of that household at Winswood, if I had the slightest hope that they would interest anybody but those who are immediately connected with me: of the old gentleman being once nearly killed by a swan; of his love for snuff and barley-sugar, and of his keeping both in the same waistcoat-pocket; of his occasional playfulness, and of his wife's little jealousies; of Peggy's sexagenarian girlhood; and of their boarder, Miss Emmet, a sister of Robert Emmet, the Irish insurgent. I am not sure that some of these anecdotes would not illustrate usefully the English country life of half a century ago.

The clergyman's widow had been in her young days a very handsome person. She was a wife at twenty, and a mother at twenty-one; but almost as many years afterwards, when she went with her husband, "my Mr. Hazlitt," to America, the captain of the vessel was more pressing in his attentions than the minister found agreeable.

So she had not parted with her good looks at forty, and she lived to be over ninety, to get a third set of teeth, and to thread Peggy's needles.

Old Mrs. Hazlitt and her mother, Mrs. Loftus, were certainly a very remarkable couple. Mrs. Loftus was born in the reign of George I., and might have very well known a person who had seen Charles I., and remembered the Revolution of '88; and she survived till her great-grandson, who is not fifty-six yet, was a boy of eight or nine. Mrs. Hazlitt herself was born in 1746, and witnessed the accession of Queen Victoria.

I have been unconsciously wandering very far from the main subject; but the occasion was too seductive to be resisted. Besides, the space will not have been ill-bestowed, if I have succeeded in showing that the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt was not merely the father of his son William, but the parent of his son's genius; and that the seeds, which only came to full maturity a generation later, were in that "poor Irish lad" who left the cradle of the Hazlitts' to seek a better fortune—and who lived to win a respect, from all who were admitted to his acquaintance, which few men of any rank gain, and even fewer perhaps deserve.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Lamb's Wednesdays.

It was while Lamb was residing in Mitre Court Buildings that those Wednesday evenings of his were in their glory. Mr. Hazlitt has made himself their historiographer, and if he had not left upon record some account of these meetings of some of the choicest spirits of the day, all trace of them must have perished with those, who had the honour to be guests. In two of my grandfather's papers, I find graphic pictures of these Wednesdays and Wednesday-men. There is a curious sketch in one of a little tilt between Coleridge and Holcroft, which must not be omitted, because my grandfather was, to a very slight degree, mixed up in it. It was thus, in Mr. Hazlitt's own words:—"Coleridge was riding the high German horse, and demonstrating the 'Categories of the Transcendental Philosophy' to the author of the 'Road to Ruin,' who insisted on his knowledge of German and German metaphysics, having read the 'Critique of Pure Reason' in the original. 'My dear Mr. Holcroft,' said Coleridge, in a tone of infinitely-

provoking conciliation, 'you really put me in mind of a sweet pretty German girl, about fifteen, that I met with in the Hartz Forest in Germany—and who one day, as I was reading the "Limits of the Knowable and the Unknowable," the profoundest of all his works, with great attention, came behind my chair, and leaning over, said, "What, you read Kant? Why, I that am a German born, don't understand him!"' This was too much to bear, and Holcroft, starting up, called out in no measured tone, 'Mr. Coleridge, you are the most eloquent man I ever met with, and the most troublesome with your eloquence.' Phillips* held the cribbage-peg, that was to mark him game, suspended in his hand; and the whist table was silent for a moment. I saw Holcroft downstairs, and on coming to the landing-place in Mitre Court, he stopped me to observe that he thought Mr. Coleridge a very clever man, with a great command of language, but that he feared he did not always affix very precise ideas to the words he used. After he was gone, we had our laugh out, and went on with the argument on the nature of Reason, the Imagination, and the Will. . . . . It would make a supplement to the 'Biographia Literaria,' in a volume and a half, octavo."

It was at one of these *Wednesdays* that Lamb started a question as to persons "one would wish to have seen." It was a suggestive topic, and proved a fruitful one. Mr. Hazlitt, who was there, has left an account behind him of the kind of talk which arose out of this hint so

* Colonel Phillips, mentioned before.

lightly thrown out by the author of 'Elia,' and it is worth giving in his own words:*—

"On the question being started, Ayrton said, 'I suppose the two first persons you would choose to see would be the two greatest names in English literature, Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Locke?' In this Ayrton, as usual, reckoned without his host. Every one burst out a laughing at the expression of Lamb's face, in which impatience was restrained by courtesy. 'Yes, the greatest names,' he stammered out hastily, 'but they were not persons—not persons.'—'Not persons?' said Ayrton, looking wise and foolish at the same time, afraid his triumph might be premature. 'That is,' rejoined Lamb, 'not characters, you know. By Mr. Locke and Sir Isaac Newton, you mean the "Essay on the Human Understanding" and the "Principia," which we have to this day. Beyond their contents there is nothing personally interesting in the men. But what we want to see any one *bodily* for, is when there is something peculiar, striking in the individuals, more than we can learn from their writings, and yet are curious to know. I dare say Locke and Newton were very like Kneller's portraits of them. But who could paint Shakspeare?'—'Ay,' retorted Ayrton, 'there it is; then I suppose you would prefer seeing him and Milton instead?' 'No,' said Lamb, 'neither. I have

* It forms the essay 'On Persons one would have Wished to have Seen,' in the 'New Monthly Magazine' for 1826. But I give here only such portions as are *quasi*-autobiographical; the omissions are entirely of unessentials.

seen so much of Shakspeare on the stage and on bookstalls, in frontispieces and on mantelpieces, that I am quite tired of the everlasting repetition; and as to Milton's face, the impressions that have come down to us of it I do not like; it is too starched and puritanical; and I should be afraid of losing some of the manna of his poetry in the leaven of his countenance, and the precisian's band and gown.'—'I shall guess no more,' said Ayrton. 'Who is it, then, you would like to see "in his habit as he lived," if you had your choice of the whole range of English literature?' Lamb then named Sir Thomas Brown and Fulke Greville, the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, as the two worthies whom he should feel the greatest pleasure to encounter on the floor of his apartment in their nightgown and slippers, and to exchange friendly greeting with them. At this Ayrton laughed outright, and conceived Lamb was jesting with him; but as no one followed his example, he thought there might be something in it, and waited for an explanation in a state of whimsical suspense. Lamb then (as well as I can remember a conversation that passed twenty years ago—how time slips!) went on as follows. 'The reason why I pitch upon these two authors is, that their writings are riddles, and they themselves the most mysterious of personages. They resemble the soothsayers of old, who dealt in 'dark hints and doubtful oracles; and I should like to ask them the meaning of what no mortal but themselves, I should suppose, can fathom. There is Dr. Johnson: I have no curiosity, no

strange uncertainty about him: he and Boswell together have pretty well let me into the secret of what passed through his mind. He and other writers like him are sufficiently explicit: my friends, whose repose I should be tempted to disturb (were it in my power), are implicit, inextricable, inscrutable.

"'When I look at that obscure but gorgeous prose composition, the "Urn-burial," I seem to myself to look into a deep abyss, at the bottom of which are hid pearls and rich treasure; or it is like a stately labyrinth of doubt and withering speculation, and I would invoke the spirit of the author to lead me through it. Besides, who would not be curious to see the lineaments of a man who, having himself been twice married, wished that mankind were propagated like trees! As to Fulke Greville, he is like nothing but one of his own "Prologues spoken by the ghost of an old king of Ormus," a truly formidable and inviting personage: his style is apocalyptical, cabalistical, a knot worthy of such an apparition to untie; and for the unravelling a passage or two I would stand the brunt of an encounter with so portentous a commentator!'—'I am afraid in that case,' said Ayrton, 'that if the mystery were once cleared up, the merit might be lost;' and turning to me, whispered a friendly apprehension, that while Lamb continued to admire these old crabbed authors, he would never become a popular writer. Dr. Donne was mentioned as a writer of the same period, with a very interesting countenance, whose history was singular, and whose meaning was often quite as *uncome-at-able*,

without a personal citation from the dead, as that of any of his contemporaries. The volume was produced;* and while some one was expatiating on the exquisite simplicity and beauty of the portrait prefixed to the old edition, Ayrton got hold of the poetry, and exclaiming 'What have we here?' read the following:—

> Here lies a She-Sun and a He-Moon there,
> She gives the best light to his sphere,
> Or each is both and all, and so
> They unto one another nothing owe.

"There was no resisting this, till Lamb seizing the volume, turned to the beautiful 'Lines to his Mistress,' dissuading her from accompanying him abroad, and read them with suffused features and a faltering tongue.

"Some one then inquired of Lamb if we could not see from the window the Temple walk in which Chaucer† used to take his exercise; and on his name being put to the vote, I was pleased to find that there was a general sensation in his favour in all but Ayrton, who said something about the ruggedness of the metre, and even objected to the quaintness of the orthography. I was vexed at this superficial gloss, pertinaciously reducing everything to its own trite level, and asked 'if he did not think it would be worth while to scan the eye that had first greeted the Muse in that dim twilight and

* It was probably the edition of 1669, 12mo; at least, that was the one Lamb had. There were in it many notes by Coleridge, and this memorandum: "I shall die soon, my dear Charles Lamb, and then you will not be vexed that I have be-scribbled your book."—S. T. C., 2nd May, 1811.

† Lamb had a very fair copy of Chaucer.

early dawn of English literature; to see the head round which the visions of fancy must have played like gleams of inspiration or a sudden glory; to watch those lips that 'lisped in numbers, for the numbers came'—as by a miracle, or as if the dumb should speak? Nor was it alone that he had been the first to tune his native tongue (however imperfectly to modern ears); but he was himself a noble, manly character, standing before his age and striving to advance it; a pleasant humourist withal, who has not only handed down to us the living manners of his time, but had, no doubt, store of curious and quaint devices, and would make as hearty a companion as Mine Host of the Tabard. His interview with Petrarch is fraught with interest. Yet I would rather have seen Chaucer in company with the author of the 'Decameron,' and have heard them exchange their best stories together,—'The Squire's Tale' against 'The Story of the Falcon,' 'The Wife of Bath's Prologue' against the 'Adventures of Friar Albert.' How fine to see the high mysterious brow which learning then wore, relieved by the gay, familiar tone of men of the world, and by the courtesies of genius! Surely, the thoughts and feelings which passed through the minds of these great revivers of learning, these Cadmuses who sowed the teeth of letters, must have stamped an expression on their features, as different from the moderns as their books, and well worth the perusal.

"'Dante,' I continued, 'is as interesting a person as his own Ugolino, one whose lineaments curiosity would as eagerly devour in order to penetrate his spirit, and the

only one of the Italian poets I should care much to see. There is a fine portrait of Ariosto by no less a hand than Titian's; light, Moorish, spirited, but not answering our idea. The same artist's large colossal profile of Peter Aretine is the only likeness of the kind that has the effect of conversing with "the mighty dead," and this is truly spectral, ghastly, necromantic.'

"Lamb put it to me if I should like to see Spenser as well as Chaucer; and I answered without hesitation, 'No; for that his beauties were ideal, visionary; not palpable or personal, and therefore connected with less curiosity about the man. His poetry was the essence of romance, a very halo round the bright orb of fancy; and the bringing in the individual might dissolve the charm. No tones of voice could come up to the mellifluous cadence of his verse; no form but of a winged angel could vie with the airy shapes he has described. He was (to our apprehensions) rather "a creature of the element, that lived in the rainbow and played in the plighted clouds," than an ordinary mortal. Or if he did appear, I should wish it to be as a mere vision, like one of his own pageants, and that he should pass by unquestioned, like a dream or sound—

> ——*that* was Arion crown'd:
> So went he playing on the wat'ry plain!'

"Captain Burney muttered something about Columbus, and Martin Burney hinted at the Wandering Jew; but the last was set aside as spurious, and the first made over to the New World.

"'I should like,' said Mrs. Reynolds, 'to have seen Pope talking with Patty Blount; and I *have* seen Goldsmith.' Every one turned round to look at Mrs. Reynolds, as if by so doing they too could get a sight of Goldsmith.

"'Where,' asked a harsh croaking voice, 'was Dr. Johnson in the years 1745-6? He did not write anything that we know of, nor is there any account of him in Boswell during those two years. Was he in Scotland with the Pretender? He seems to have passed through the scenes in the Highlands in company with Boswell many years after "with lack-lustre eye," yet as if they were familiar to him, or associated in his mind with interests that he durst not explain. If so, it would be an additional reason for my liking him; and I would give something to have seen him seated in the tent with the youthful Majesty of Britain, and penning the proclamation to all true subjects and adherents of the legitimate Government.'

"'I thought,' said Ayrton, turning short round upon Lamb, 'that you of the Lake School did not like Pope?'—'Not like Pope! My dear sir, you must be under a mistake—I can read him over and over for ever!'—'Why certainly, the "Essay on Man" must be allowed to be a masterpiece.'—'It may be so, but I seldom look into it.'—'Oh! then it's his Satires you admire?'—'No, not his Satires, but his friendly epistles and his compliments.'—'Compliments! I did not know he ever made any.'—'The finest,' said Lamb, 'that were ever paid by the wit of man. Each of them

is worth an estate for life—nay, is an immortality. There is that superb one to Lord Cornbury. Was there ever more artful insinuation of idolatrous praise? And then that noble apotheosis of his friend Lord Mansfield. And with what a fine turn of indignant flattery he addresses Lord Bolingbroke—

> Why rail they then, if but one wreath of mine,
> Oh! all accomplish'd St. John, deck thy shrine?

Or turn,' continued Lamb, with a slight hectic on his cheek, and his eye glistening, 'to his list of early friends:—

> But why then publish? Granville the polite,
> And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
> Well-natured Garth inflamed with early praise,
> And Congreve loved and Swift endured my lays:
> The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield read,
> Ev'n mitred Rochester* would nod the head;
> And St. John's self (great Dryden's friend before)
> Received with open arms one poet more.
> Happy my studies, if by these approved!
> Happier their author, if by these beloved!
> From these the world will judge of men and books,
> Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cooks.'

Here his voice totally failed him, and throwing down the book, he said, 'Do you think I would not wish to have been friends with such a man as this?'

"'What say you to Dryden?'—'He rather made a show of himself, and courted popularity in that lowest temple of fame, a coffee-house, so as in some measure to vulgarize one's idea of him. Pope, on the contrary, reached the very *beau-idéal* of what a poet's life should

* Atterbury.

be; and his fame while living seemed to be an emanation from that which was to circle his name after death. He was so far enviable (and one would feel proud to have witnessed the rare spectacle in him) that he was almost the only poet and man of genius who met with his reward on this side of the tomb; who realized in friends, fortune, the esteem of the world, the almost sanguine hopes of a youthful ambition; and who found that sort of patronage from the great during his lifetime which they would be thought anxious to bestow upon him after his death. Read Gay's verses to him on his supposed return from Greece, after his translation of Homer was finished, and say if you would not gladly join the bright procession that welcomed him home, or see it once more land at Whitehall stairs.'—'Still,' said Mrs. Reynolds, 'I would rather have seen him talking with Patty Blount, or riding by in a coronet-coach with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu!'

"Erasmus Phillips, who was deep in a game of piquet at the other end of the room, whispered to Martin Burney to ask if Junius would not be a fit person to invoke from the dead. 'Yes,' said Lamb, 'provided he would agree to lay aside his mask.'

"We were now at a stand for a short time, when Fielding was mentioned as a candidate: only one, however, seconded the proposition. 'Richardson?'—'By all means; but only to look at him through the glass door of his back-shop, hard at work upon one of his novels (the most extraordinary contrast that ever was presented between an author and his works), but

not to let him come behind his counter, lest he should want you to turn customer; nor to go upstairs with him, lest he should offer to read the first manuscript of Sir Charles Grandison, which was originally written in eight-and-twenty volumes octavo; or get out the letters of his female correspondents, to prove that Joseph Andrews was low."

"There was but one statesman in the whole of English history that any one expressed the least desire to see—Oliver Cromwell, with his fine, frank, rough, pimply face, and wily policy—and one enthusiast, John Bunyan, the immortal author of the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' It seemed that if he came into the room dreams would follow him, and that each person would nod under his golden cloud, 'night-sphered in Heaven,' a canopy as strange and stately as any in Homer.

"Of all persons near our own time, Garrick's name was received with the greatest enthusiasm, who was proposed by Barron Field. He presently superseded both Hogarth and Handel, who had been talked of, but then it was on condition that he should act in tragedy and comedy, in the play and the farce, 'Lear' and 'Wildair' and 'Abel Drugger.' What a *sight for sore eyes* that would be! Who would not part with a year's income at least, almost with a year of his natural life, to be present at it? Besides, as he could not act alone, and recitations are unsatisfactory things, what a troop he must bring with him—the silver-tongued Barry and Quin, and Shuter and Weston, and Mrs. Clive and

Mrs. Pritchard, of whom I have heard my father* speak as so great a favourite when he was young! This would indeed be a revival of the dead, the restoring of art; and so much the more desirable, as such is the lurking scepticism mingled with our overstrained admiration of past excellence, that though we have the speeches of Burke, the portraits of Reynolds, the writings of Goldsmith, and the conversation of Johnson, to show what people could do at that period, and to confirm the universal testimony to the merits of Garrick; yet, as it was before our time, we have our misgivings, as if he was probably after all little better than a Bartlemy-fair actor, dressed out to play *Macbeth* in a scarlet coat and laced cocked-hat. For one, I should like to have seen and heard him with my own eyes and ears. Certainly, by all accounts, if any one was ever moved by the true histrionic *æstus*, it was Garrick. When he followed the Ghost in 'Hamlet,' he did not drop the sword, as most actors do, behind the scenes, but kept the point raised the whole way round, so fully was he possessed with the idea, or so anxious not to lose sight of his part for a moment. Once, at a splendid dinner-party at Lord ——'s, they suddenly missed Garrick, and could not imagine what was become of him, till they were drawn to the window by the convulsive screams and peals of laughter of a young negro boy, who was rolling on the ground in an ecstacy of delight to see Garrick mimicking a turkey-cock in the courtyard, with his coat-tail stuck out behind, and in a

* The Rev. Mr. Hazlitt.

seeming flutter of feathered rage and pride. Of our party only two persons present had seen the British Roscius;* and they seemed as willing as the rest to renew their acquaintance with their old favourite.

"We were interrupted in the hey-day and mid-career of this fanciful speculation by a grumbler in a corner, who declared it was a shame to make all this rout about a mere player and farce-writer, to the neglect and exclusion of the fine old dramatists, the contemporaries and rivals of Shakspeare. Lamb said he had anticipated this objection when he had named the author of 'Mustapha and Alaham;' and out of caprice insisted upon keeping him to represent the set, in preference to the wild hair-brained enthusiast Kit Marlowe; to the sexton of St. Ann's, Webster, with his melancholy yew-trees and death's-heads; to Deckar, who was but a garrulous proser; to the voluminous Heywood; and even to Beaumont and Fletcher, whom we might offend by complimenting the wrong author on their joint productions. Lord Brook, on the contrary, stood quite by himself, or in Cowley's words, was 'a vast species alone.' Some one hinted at the circumstance of his being a lord, which rather startled Lamb, but he said a *ghost* would perhaps dispense with strict etiquette, on being regularly addressed by his title. Ben Jonson divided our suffrages pretty equally. Some were afraid he would begin to traduce Shakspeare, who was not present to defend himself. 'If he grows disagreeable,' it was whispered aloud, 'there is Godwin can match

* W. H. was not one of the two.

him.' At length his romantic visit to Drummond of Hawthornden was mentioned, and turned the scale in his favour.

"Lamb inquired if there was any one that was hanged* that I would choose to mention? And I answered, Eugene Aram. The name of the 'Admirable Crichton' was suddenly started as a splendid example of *waste* talents, so different from the generality of his countrymen. This choice was mightily approved by a North Briton present, who declared himself descended from that prodigy of learning and accomplishment, and said he had family plate in his possession as vouchers for the fact, with the initials A. C.—*Admirable Crichton!* Hunt laughed, or rather roared as heartily at this as I should think he has done for many years.

"The last-named Mitre-courtier then wished to know whether there were any metaphysicians to whom one might be tempted to apply the wizard spell? I replied, there were only six in modern times deserving the name—Hobbes, Berkeley, Butler, Hartley, Hume, Leibnitz, and perhaps Jonathan Edwards, a Massachusetts man. As to the French, who talked fluently of having *created* this science, there was not a tittle in any of their writings that was not to be found literally in the authors I had mentioned. [Horne Tooke, who might have a claim to come in under the head of Grammar, was still living.] None of these names seemed to excite much interest, and I did not plead for the reappearance of those who might be thought

* Fulke Greville.

best fitted by the abstracted nature of their studies for their present spiritual and disembodied state, and who, even while on this living stage, were nearly divested of common flesh and blood. As Ayrton, with an uneasy fidgety face, was about to put some question about Mr. Locke and Dugald Stewart, he was prevented by Martin Burney, who observed, 'If J—— was here, he would undoubtedly be for having up those profound and redoubted scholiasts, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus.' I said this might be fair enough in him who had read or fancied he had read the original works; but I did not see how we could have any right to call up these authors to give an account of themselves in person, till we had looked into their writings.

"By this time it should seem that some rumour of our whimsical deliberation had got wind, and had disturbed the *irritabile genus* in their shadowy abodes, for we received messages from several candidates that we had just been thinking of. Gray declined our invitation, though he had not yet been asked: Gay offered to come, and bring in his hand the Duchess of Bolton, the original Polly: Steele and Addison left their cards as Captain Sentry and Sir Roger de Coverley: Swift came in and sat down without speaking a word, and quitted the room as abruptly: Otway and Chatterton were seen lingering on the opposite side of the Styx, but could not muster enough between them to pay Charon his fare: Thomson fell asleep in the boat, and was rowed back again: and Burns sent a low fellow, one

John Barleycorn, an old companion of his, who had conducted him to the other world, to say that he had during his life-time been drawn out of his retirement as a show, only to be made an exciseman of, and that he would rather remain where he was. He desired, however, to shake hands by his representative: the hand thus held out was in a burning fever, and shook prodigiously.

"The room was hung round with several portraits of eminent painters. While we were debating, whether we should demand speech with these masters of mute eloquence, whose features were so familiar to us, it seemed that all at once they glided from their frames, and seated themselves at some little distance from us. There was Leonardo with his majestic beard and watchful eye, having a bust of Archimedes before him; next him was Raphael's graceful head turned round to the Fornarina; and on his other side was Lucretia Borgia, with calm, golden locks; Michael Angelo had placed the model of St. Peter's on the table before him; Correggio had an angel at his side; Titian was seated, with his Mistress between himself and Giorgione; Guido was accompanied by his own Aurora, who took a dice-box from him; Claude held a mirror in his hand; Rubens patted a beautiful panther (led in by a satyr) on the head; Vandyke appeared as his own Paris, and Rembrandt was hid under furs, gold chains, and jewels, which Sir Joshua eyed closely, holding his hand so as to shade his forehead. Not a word was spoken; and as we rose to do them homage,

they still presented the same surface to the view. Not being *bonâ fide* representations of living people, we got rid of the splendid apparitions by signs and dumb show. As soon as they had melted into thin air, there was a loud noise at the outer door, and we found it was Giotto, Cimabue, and Ghirlandaio, who had been raised from the dead by their earnest desire to see their illustrious successors—

> Whose names on earth
> In Fame's eternal records live for aye!

Finding them gone, they had no ambition to be seen after them, and mournfully withdrew. 'Egad!' said Lamb, 'those are the very fellows I should like to have had some talk with, to know how they could see to paint, when all was dark around them?'

"'But shall we have nothing to say,' interrogated G. J——, 'to the Legend of Good Women?' 'Name, name, Mr. J——,' cried Hunt, in a boisterous tone of friendly exultation; 'name as many as you please, without reserve or fear of molestation!' J—— was perplexed between so many amiable recollections, that the name of the lady of his choice expired in a pensive whiff of his pipe; and Lamb impatiently declared for the Duchess of Newcastle. Mrs. Hutchinson was no sooner mentioned, than she carried the day from the Duchess. We were the less solicitous on this subject of filling up the posthumous lists of Good Women, as there was already one in the room as good, as sensible, and in all respects as exemplary, as the best of them

could be for their lives! 'I should like vastly to have seen Ninon de l'Enclos,' said that incomparable person; and this immediately put us in mind that we had neglected to pay honour due to our friends on the other side of the Channel—Voltaire, the patriarch of levity, and Rousseau, the father of sentiment: Montaigne and Rabelais (great in wisdom and in wit), Molière and that illustrious group that are collected round him (in the print of that subject) to hear him read his comedy of the 'Tartuffe' at the house of Ninon; Racine, La Fontaine, Rochefoucault, St. Evremont, &c.

"'There is one person,' said a shrill, querulous voice, 'I would rather see than all these—Don Quixote!'

"'Come, come!' said Hunt; 'I thought we should have no heroes, real or fabulous. What say you, Mr. Lamb? Are you for eking out your shadowy list with such names as Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Tamerlane, or Ghengis Khan?'—'Excuse me,' said Lamb; "on the subject of characters in active life, plotters and disturbers of the world, I have a crotchet of my own, which I beg leave to reserve.'—'No, no! come, out with your worthies!'—'What do you think of Guy Fawkes and Judas Iscariot?' Hunt turned an eye upon him like a wild Indian, but cordial and full of smothered glee. 'Your most exquisite reason!' was echoed on all sides; and Ayrton thought that Lamb had now fairly entangled himself. 'Why, I cannot but think,' retorted he of the wistful countenance, 'that Guy Fawkes, that poor, fluttering, annual scarecrow of straw and rags, is an ill-used gentleman. I

would give something to see him sitting, pale and emaciated, surrounded by his matches and his barrels of gunpowder, and expecting the moment that was to transport him to Paradise for his heroic self-devotion; but if I say any more, there is that fellow Godwin will make something of it. And as to Judas Iscariot, my reason is different. I would fain see the face of him, who, having dipped his hand in the same dish with the Son of Man, could afterwards betray him. I have no conception of such a thing; nor have I ever seen any picture (not even Leonardo's very fine one) that gave me the least idea of it.'—'You have said enough, Mr. Lamb, to justify your choice.'

"'Oh! ever right, Menenius,—ever right!'

"'There is only one other person I can ever think of after this,' continued Lamb; but without mentioning a name that once put on a semblance of mortality. 'If Shakspeare was to come into the room we should all rise up to meet him; but if that person was to come into it, we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of his garment!'"

CHAPTER XIX.

An evening at the "Southampton."

THE sketch of one of the *Mitre-Courtiers'* Wednesdays in the last chapter lets as much light into the subject as we can ever hope to get, and brings before us the men who formed that long-dissolved junto with a vividness to have been expected from one who was "both painter and author." This view of a Wednesday-evening interior is precious from its uniqueness, for Mr. Hazlitt was the only clubman who has cut out himself and his fellows upon paper for our edification.

It is something given towards the history of a man, when we can take his likeness at different points and in various attitudes: all of them the same man, as the sea in a calm and in a hurricane is still the same sea, but with the changes of mood and circumstance.

We have tried to realize him, as he stood shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the Courtiers, not the least man of the gathering, where, however, all (so Elia had commanded) were for the time equal. Now, he has left us a companion-picture of another scene—An Evening at the "Southampton"—where *he* was accustomed to

give audience, and was himself the Great Observed, by right of being *Edinburgh Reviewer*, *London Magazine*-man, a person of letters who was thought big game enough, both in London and Edinburgh, for Mr. Gifford's and Mr. Blackwood's largest shot; and, behind all this, painter and metaphysician.

For several years Mr. Hazlitt was a very regular visitor at the Southampton Coffee-house, which still stands (with the difference of renovation) at the corner of Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane. He always came in the evening, occupied a particular place, reserved for him as scrupulously as his seat at Covent Garden, called for what he wanted, and settled the score whenever it happened to be convenient. His custom was worth something to the establishment, for several of his literary and miscellaneous acquaintance, sure of finding him there, and of hearing "good talk," made the "Arms" their trysting-spot.

To begin with the most important personage, next, of course, to the Great Observed himself:—

"William, our waiter," says he, "is dressed neatly in black, takes in the 'Tickler' (which many of the gentlemen like to look into), wears, I am told, a diamond pin in his shirt-collar, has a music-master to teach him to play on the flageolet two hours before the maids are up, complains of confinement and a delicate constitution, and is a complete Master Stephen in his way."

This was the man who was "a sleek hand for his temper in managing an argument," and who admired George Kirkpatrick. The members of this circle were

fond of making bets and laying wagers, "as whether," instances Mr. H., "Dr. Johnson's Dictionary was originally published in quarto or folio." George Kirkpatrick once lost a bet he had entered into, that Congreve's play of 'The Mourning Bride' was Shakspeare's! He paid in punch.

There were two Kirkpatricks in the Society. "George's brother Roger was," says my grandfather, "a rare fellow, of the driest humour and the nicest tact, of infinite sleights and evasions, of a picked phraseology, and the very soul of mimicry.

"I fancy," continues Mr. Hazlitt, "I have some insight into physiognomy myself, but he could often expound to me, at a single glance, the characters of those of my acquaintance that I had been most at fault about. The account, as it was cast up and balanced between us, was not always very favourable. How finely, how truly, how gaily he took off the company at the Society! Poor and faint are my sketches compared to his!"

Mr. Barry Cornwall, Mr. Mudford, editor of the *Courier*, whom Mr. Hazlitt had succeeded in 1814 on the *Morning Chronicle*, and Martin Burney, also frequented the "Arms."

Dr. Whittle, "a large, plain, fair-faced" man, and a Moravian preacher, was one of them, and Sarratt the chess-player. "Whittle was once sitting," relates my grandfather, "where Sarratt was playing a game at chess without seeing the board; and after remaining for some time absorbed in silent wonder, he turned

suddenly to me, and said, 'Do you know, Mr. Hazlitt, that I think there is something I could do?' 'Well, what is that?' 'Why, perhaps you would not guess, but I think I could dance; I'm sure I could; ay, I could dance like Vestris!'

"Sarratt, who was a man of various accomplishments (among others one of the Fancy), afterwards bared his arm, to convince us of his muscular strength, and Mrs. S., going out of the room with another lady, said, 'Do you know, madam, the Doctor [Whittle] is a great jumper!' Molière could not outdo this. Never shall I forget his [Whittle's] pulling off his coat to eat beefsteaks on equal terms with Martin Burney.

"A country gentleman happened to drop in, and thinking to show off in London company, launched into a lofty panegyric on the 'Bard' of Gray, as the sublimest composition in the English language. This assertion presently appeared to be an anachronism, though it was probably the opinion in vogue thirty years ago, when the gentleman was last in town. After a little floundering, one of the party volunteered to express a more contemporary sentiment, by asking, in a tone of mingled confidence and doubt—'But you don't think, sir, that Gray is to be mentioned as a poet in the same day as my Lord Byron?' The disputants were now at issue; all that resulted was, that Gray was set aside as a poet who would not go down among readers of the present day; and his patron treated the works of the noble bard as mere ephemeral effusions, and spoke of poets that would be admired thirty years

hence, which was the farthest stretch of his critical imagination. His antagonist's did not even reach so far."

There was Mr. George Mouncey, too, of the firm of Mouncey and Gray, solicitors, Staple Inn, a gentleman who displayed his fondness for conviviality at an early stage in the proceedings, by sinking into a hopelessly nebulous frame of mind.

"Yet Hazlitt," says Patmore, "had a great respect and even personal regard for Mouncey, and always seemed to take pleasure in addressing and listening to him, which, however, he did invariably from the opposite side of the room, and in nine cases out of ten without the possibility of making out one-half of what M. said." The following declaration is Mr. Patmore's, and, from its charming simplicity, must be acceptable:—"For my own part, often as I have talked and listened to Mouncey *with unmingled pleasure, I have no recollection of having clearly understood a single sentence that he ever uttered.*"

"How I should make my friend Mouncey stare," says Mr. Hazlitt himself, "if I were to mention the name of my still better friend, old honest Signor Friscobaldo, the father of Bellafront." Yet his name was perhaps invented, and the scenes in which he figures, unrivalled, might for the first time have been read aloud to thrilling ears on this very spot!

"'Don't you think,' says Mouncey to me, 'that Mr. —— is a very sensible, well-informed man?' 'Why no,' I say; 'he seems to have no ideas of his own, and only to wait to see what others will say, to set himself

against it.' Here was a rap on the knuckles for Mouncey.

"Before I had exchanged half a dozen sentences with Mouncey, I found that he knew several of my old acquaintances (an immediate introduction of itself, for the discussing the characters and foibles of common friends is a great sweetening and cement of friendship), and had been intimate with most of the wits and men about town for the last twenty years. He knew Tobin, Wordsworth, Porson, Wilson, Paley, Erskine, and many others. . . . . On my saying that I had never seen the Greek Professor but once, at the library of the London Institution, when he was dressed in an old rusty black coat, with cobwebs hanging to the skirt of it, and with a large patch of coarse brown-paper covering the whole length of his nose . . . . talking to one of the proprietors with an air of suavity, approaching to condescension, Mouncey could not help expressing some little uneasiness for the credit of classical literature. 'I submit, sir, [he said] whether common sense is not the principal thing?'

"I remember Roger Kirkpatrick once describing three different persons together to myself and Martin Burney, namely, the manager of a country theatre, a tragic, and a comic performer, till we were ready to tumble on the floor with laughing at the oddity of their humours, and at Roger's extraordinary powers of ventriloquism, bodily and mental; and Burney said (such was the vividness of the scene) that when he awoke the next morning, he wondered what three amusing charac-

ters he had been in company with the evening before. Oh! it was a rich treat to see him describe Mudford, him of the *Courier*, the Contemplative Man, who wrote an answer to 'Cœlebs,' coming into a room folding up his great-coat, taking out a little pocket volume, laying it down to think, rubbing the calf of his leg with grave self-complacency, and starting out of his reverie when spoken to, with an inimitable rapid exclamation of 'Eh!'

"We for some time took C—— for a lawyer, from a certain arguteness of voice and slenderness of neck, and from his having a quibble and a laugh at himself always ready. On inquiry, however, he was found to be a patent-medicine seller, and having leisure in his apprenticeship, and a forwardness of parts, he had taken to study 'Blackstone' and 'The Statutes at Large.'

"Wells,* Mouncey, and myself, were all that remained one evening. We had sat together several hours without being tired of one another's company. The conversation turned on the Beauties of Charles the Second's Court at Windsor, and from thence to Count Grammont, their gallant and gay historian. . . . Jacob Hall's prowess was not forgotten, nor the story of Miss Stewart's garters. I was getting on in my way with that delicate *endroit*, in which Miss Churchill is first introduced at court, and is besieged (as a matter of course) by the Duke of York. This [passage] I contended was striking, affecting, and grand, the sublime of amorous biography. . . .

* Mr. Charles Wells, a solicitor, and author of 'Joseph and his Brethren,' a dramatic poem, and 'Tales from Nature.'

"Wells then spoke of Lucius Apuleius and his Golden Ass . . . . and went on to the romance of Heliodorus, Theagenes and Chariclea. . . . . The night waned, but our glasses brightened, enriched with the pearls of Grecian story. Our cup-bearer slept in a corner of the room, like another Endymion, in the pale ray of a half-extinguished lamp. . . . . Mouncey sat with his hat on, and with a hectic flush in his face, while any hope remained; but as soon as we rose to go, he darted out of the room as quick as lightning, determined not to be the last that went.

"Hume* was of the Pipe Office (not unfitly appointed), and in his cheerfuller cups would delight to speak of a widow and a bowling-green, that ran in his head to the last. . . . ." †

A Mr. Williams, who lately died at Putney, was present on some of these occasions, and remembered well the scenes and the actors in them. I apprehend that the author of 'Marcian Colonna' is now the only person living who can recall both these to mind; and I hope that he will not be angry with me for mentioning his name in such a connexion.

Mr. Patmore describes very entertainingly the scene which took place one evening‡ at the "Southampton," when he was there.

"Hazlitt," he tells us, "told some capital things

* Joseph Hume, Esq., of Bayswater, Lamb's "not M.P."

† The scene in the 'Sentimental Journey' between Uncle Toby and Widow Wadman.

‡ He is wrong in his date, however. Mr. H. was abroad on January 15, 1825.

about Dawe the painter. Describing his essential and ingrained meanness of character, he said 'He had a soul like the sole of a shoe;' and he related some things illustrative of this character. . . . He described a capital scene that had taken place at Dawe's. There was a man named K——, who was reckoned to be like Dawe in personal appearance, and this K. had often asked Hazlitt to introduce him to Dawe. . . . At last, Hazlitt took K. to Dawe's house. There was a glass over the chimney-piece in Dawe's painting-room, and on Hazlitt introducing K., he described each as giving a furtive glance at the glass and then at each other.

"*Hazlitt.*—This is Mr. K——, Mr. Dawe.

"*Dawe.*—Very happy to see Mr. K—— (looking first at K. and then at himself in the glass, and giving a sort of inward smile of self-congratulation. . . . .). I think they say we are like each other, Mr. K——. I can't say I exactly see any great similarity (looking in the glass again). There is a little something, to be sure, about the mouth—a sort of—

"*K*——.—Why, no; I don't see much resemblance myself. There may, perhaps, be a little something in the forehead—a kind of—

"He [Hazlitt] described very admirably a scene he had witnessed at the Montagus between Mrs. Montagu and Dawe, illustrating the contrast between the flowing, graceful, queen-like style and manner of the one, and the little, peddling, pimping, snipped manner of the other.

"Speaking of Haydon to-night, he said he had just

been at Opie's, and that Mrs. Opie had told him how it was that her husband . . . . . had been compelled to lend Haydon fifty pounds. She said, 'Oh, sir, my husband *could not help* lending it to him—he *would* have it . . . . . .'"

It was at the "Southampton" that Mr. Hazlitt, Mr. Cruikshank, and Mr. Hone used to meet, and discuss the subjects for Hone's next squib. I believe that my grandfather is answerable for some of the outlines of these, and for suggesting to Cruikshank what he thought was the salient point for illustration. The story goes that he was once trying to make himself understood to Cruikshank, when the latter got up, and dipping his finger in his ale-glass, traced something in beer on the table. "Is that what you mean, sir?" he asked, and my grandfather assented.

My grandfather relates that when he was at Florence in 1825 the people lifted up their hands when they were shown the caricatures in the 'Queen's Matrimonial Ladder,' and asked if they were really likenesses of the king?

He was generally full the next morning, when he went to see the Reynells or some other intimates, of what Mouncey had said at the "Southampton" the night before, and what he said to him. Perhaps he was a little severe on the cod, which had come up for supper, and of which he was foolish enough to try some.

CHAPTER XX.

1821.

The duel between Mr. Scott and Mr. Christie—Difference between Mr. Hazlitt and Mr. Leigh Hunt.

'BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE' had been originally established by Mr. Pringle, but its management fell into the hands of Professor Wilson, Mr. Lockhart, and a few others, some months after its commencement, Blackwood and Pringle having disagreed. This change led to the insertion of a series of articles, some of which contained serious personalities.*

As Mr. Hazlitt's name has been mentioned in connexion with a duel which arose out of these attacks on persons of the day, connected with my grandfather's side in politics, and as the accounts of it found in some books are not accurate, the contemporary narrative from the 'Annual Register' is here given entire:—

"A duel was fought on Friday, Feb. 16 [1821], at nine

* Lockhart wrote under the signature of Z. The first article which was printed in the magazine of this character was one by Hogg, called 'The Chaldee MS.,' but which was in fact so altered by Lockhart and the rest before insertion, that it retained very little of its original form. Lockhart was the writer of the attacks on Leigh Hunt, which was of course an aggravation in the eyes of Mr. Hazlitt.

o'clock at night, between two gentlemen of the names of Scott and Christie. The parties met at Chalk Farm, by moonlight, attended by their seconds and surgeons; and after exchanging shots without effect, at the second fire Mr. Christie's ball struck Mr. Scott just above the hip on the right side. Mr. Scott fell, and was removed to the Chalk Farm Tavern. The meeting took place in consequence of the following circumstances:— Mr. Lockhart, the reputed author of 'Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk,' having been personally and violently attacked in the 'London Magazine,' a work professedly edited by Mr. Scott, came to London for the purpose of obtaining from Mr. Scott an explanation, apology, or meeting. Mr. Scott, as we understand, declined giving anything of the sort, unless Mr. Lockhart would first deny that he was editor of 'Blackwood's Magazine.' This Mr. Lockhart did not consider it necessary to do; and their correspondence ended with a note from Mr. Lockhart, containing very strong and unqualified expressions touching Mr. Scott's personal character and courage. To meet this Mr. Scott published his account of the affair, which differed very little as to facts; but a circumstance occurred subsequently which placed the matter on a different footing. Mr. Lockhart, in his statement, which was printed, says that a copy of it had been sent to Mr. Scott; whereas it appears that the statement *generally* circulated contained a disavowal of Mr. Lockhart's editorship of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' which the copy of his statement *actually* sent to Mr. Scott did not. Mr. Scott therefore says, that in

withholding from him the disavowal he asked, he prevented the meeting; and that, in affixing to the statement the declaration that a copy of that statement had been forwarded to him (Mr. Scott), Mr. Lockhart had been guilty of falsehood. The other party say, that though Mr. Lockhart would own to the world that he was *not* the editor of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' he never would say that he was not the editor to Mr. Scott; because Mr. Scott had no right to demand such an explanation.

"It appears that the error arose in leaving the paragraph standing, which states that a copy of the statement had been sent to Mr. Scott. Mr. Scott's attack produced a reply from Mr. Christie, Mr. Lockhart's friend, which reply produced a challenge from Mr. Scott, which Mr. Christie accepted; and at Mr. Scott's suggestion, agreed to meet him at nine o'clock at night. Mr. Christie did not fire *at* Mr. Scott in the first instance, a circumstance of which Mr. Scott was not apprized; but on the second shot he levelled his pistol at him, and too truly hit his mark. Mr. Lockhart is one of his Majesty's counsel at the Scotch bar, and son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, Bart. Mr. Scott expired at half-past nine, on the night of Tuesday the 27th, without a groan. He was between thirty and forty years of age, and has left a wife and two children. An inquest was held on the body, and a verdict of *Wilful Murder* given against Mr. Christie and the two seconds, Mr. Trail and Mr. Patmore.* The coroner's

* The incident brought Mr. Patmore into great discredit at the time, not because he was concerned in the duel, but

warrant was accordingly issued for their apprehension; but the parties have for the present withdrawn."

Now, it remains to be seen how Mr. Hazlitt was indirectly implicated in the matter. Mr. Redding, in his 'Recollections,' says:—

"[Horace] Smith thought and said* that I must be under a mistake, when I stated some years afterwards that 'Campbell declared to me that Hazlitt had been a means of irritating John Scott to such a degree, that he was one cause of his going out in the duel in which he fell.' The remark of Smith is: '[Thomas] Campbell was too prone to believe whatever he might hear in disparagement of Hazlitt, and in this instance I have reason to think he was misinformed.'

"I believe I also stated the manner in which I was informed Hazlitt spoke. Not with the intention of provoking Scott directly, but in a mode which had the same effect—for it would appear that it was a point upon which Scott was sensitive—a sort of taunting. 'I don't pretend [said Hazlitt] to hold the principles of honour which you hold. I would neither give nor accept a challenge—you hold the opinions of the world—with you it is different—as for me it would be nothing. I do not think as you and the world think.'"

A sequel to this sad catastrophe, more striking than

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because he did not interfere at the proper moment to save Scott's life. Scott married Colnaghi the printseller's daughter; she is said to have been a beauty.

* In a paper called 'A Greybeard's Gossip about His Literary Acquaintance.'

appropriate or agreeable, was the difference which arose a few months afterwards between Mr. Hazlitt and Mr. Leigh Hunt, owing to some remarks upon Mr. Shelley in 'Table Talk.' The passage occurs in the essay 'On Paradox and Common-place.' Shelley is characterized as a *philosophic fanatic;* and there were other points to complain of. This attack on Mr. Hunt and his friend brought the following letter from the former:—

"Hampstead, April 20 [1821].

"I think, Mr. Hazlitt, you might have found a better time, and place too, for assaulting me and my friends in this bitter manner. A criticism on 'Table Talk' was to appear in next Sunday's *Examiner*, but I have thought it best, upon the whole, not to let it appear, for I must have added a quarrelsome note to it; and the sight of acquaintances and brother-reformers cutting and carbonadoing one another in public is, I conceive, no advancement to the cause of liberal opinion, however you may think they injure it in other respects. In God's name, why could you not tell Mr. Shelley in a pleasant manner of what you dislike in him? If it is not mere spleen, you make a gross mistake in thinking that he is not open to advice, or so wilfully in love with himself and his opinions. His spirit is worthy of his great talents. Besides, do you think that nobody has thought or suffered, or come to conclusions through thought or suffering, but yourself? You are fond of talking against vanity: but do you think that people will see no vanity in that very fondness—in your being

so intolerant with everybody's ideas of improvement but your own, and in resenting so fiercely the possession of a trifling quality or so which you do not happen to number among your own? I have been flattered by your praises: I have been (I do not care what you make of the acknowledgment) instructed, and I thought bettered, by your objections; but it is one thing to be dealt candidly with or rallied, and another to have the whole alleged nature of one's self and a dear friend torn out and thrown in one's face, as if we had not a common humanity with yourself. Is it possible that a misconception of anything private can transport you into these—what shall I call them?—extravagances of stomach? or that a few paltry fellows in Murray's or Blackwood's interest can worry you into such outrageous efforts to prove you have no vanities in common with those whom you are acquainted with? At all events, I am sure that this sulky, dog-in-the-manger philosophy, which will have neither one thing nor t'other, neither alteration nor want of it, marriage nor no marriage, egotism nor no egotism, hope nor despair, can do no sort of good to anybody. But I have faith enough in your disinterestedness and suffering to tell you so privately instead of publicly; and you might have paid as decent a compliment to a man half killed with his thoughts for others if you had done as much for me, instead of making my faults stand for my whole character, and inventing those idle things about '. . . . .' and hints to emperors. If you wished to quarrel with me you should have done so at once, instead of inviting

me to your house, coming to mine, and in the meanwhile getting ready the proof-sheets of such a book as this—preparing and receiving specimens of the dagger which was to strike at a sick head and heart, and others whom it loved. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of even in your philosophy; and if you had a little more imagination, the very 'cruelty' of your stomach would carry you beyond itself, and inform you so. If you did not wish to quarrel with or to cut me, how do you think that friends can eternally live upon their good behaviour in this way, and be cordial and comfortable, or whatever else you *choose* they should be—for it is difficult to find out—on pain of being drawn and quartered in your paragraphs? I wish you well.

"LEIGH HUNT.

"P. S.—Since writing this letter, which I brought to town with me to send you, I have heard that you have expressed regret at the attack upon myself. If so, I can only say that I am additionally sorry at being obliged to send it; but I should have written to you, had you attacked my friends only in that manner. I am told also, that you are angry with me for not always being punctual with you in engagements of visiting. I think I have always apologized and explained when I have not been so; but if not, surely a trifle of this kind, arising out of anything but a sense of my being necessary to others, ought not to make you tear one to pieces in this way for the sport of our mutual enemies; and I must say,

that since I got any notion of your being annoyed by such things, I have come to see you sometimes when I have been ready to drop in the streets with illness and anguish.

"William Hazlitt, Esq.,
"Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane."

Mr. Hazlitt hereupon saw Mr. Hunt, or communicated with him, and evinced a conciliatory tendency. The probability is that a letter passed, for Mr. Hunt wrote what he had further to say; and by an accident this second document is also before me:—

"Monday, April [, 1821].

"DEAR HAZLITT,

"If you do not want to quarrel with me, I certainly do not want to quarrel with you. I have always said, to my own mind and to those few to whom I am in the habit of speaking on such things, that Hazlitt might play me more tricks than any man; and I conceive you have played me some.* If I have teased you, as you

* There was always a little feeling of jealousy between my grandfather and Leigh Hunt. The former saw in his friend all those social qualities which he himself was not possessed of, and many elegant accomplishments to which he could not pretend. On the other hand, Mr. Hunt was apt to take umbrage if Mr. Hazlitt happened, in any company where they might both be, to attract more than a fair share of attention by the interest awakened in his remarks on any subject in which he was versed. But apart from these foibles, I believe sincerely that Mr. Hunt had a real friendship and regard for my grandfather, and that the latter reciprocated the sentiment—to a certain extent, valuing Mr. Hunt as one who had been, and

say, I have never revenged myself by trampling upon you in public; and I do not understand you when you say that there is no difference between having an ill opinion of one in private and trying to make everybody else partake it. But I am not aware how I can have teased you to the extent you seem to intimate. How can anybody say that I talked about the collusion you speak of? It is impossible. I both spoke of your lectures in the *Examiner*, and came to hear them; not indeed so often as I could wish, but Mrs. Hunt knows how I used to fret myself every evening at not being able to go. It was illness, and nothing else, upon my soul, that detained me; and in this it is that I accuse you of want of imagination. You have imagination enough to sympathize with all the world *in the lump;* but out of the pale of your own experience, in illness and other matters of consciousness, you seem to me incapable of making the same allowance for others which you demand for yourself. I attribute your cuttings-up of me to anything but what should make me resent them, and yet you will put the worst construction on anything I do or omit—I mean the unhandsomest construction towards yourself. I think I have consulted our personal feelings, *always* where I might have

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was, an earnest champion in the Liberal cause, long since deserted by Coleridge and Southey, and wanting all the support its true friends could lend to it. It will be remarked that in the first letter which Mr. Hunt addressed to Mr. H., he reproved him—not without reason—for betraying any, the slightest, symptom of disunion in the Liberal ranks.

revenged myself publicly, and sometimes where I have publicly praised you. I imagined, for instance, I had selected a good moment for doing the latter, when I called upon you in the *Examiner* to hear the hisses bestowed upon the Duke of Wellington. But these per contra accounts are unpleasant. I am willing to be told where my attentions to a friend are deficient; nor could you mistake me more when you say I should have 'laughed' at you for complaining. On the contrary, let but the word friendship be mentioned, and nobody is disposed to be graver than myself—to a pitch of emotion. But here I will let you into one of the secrets you ask for. I have often said, I have a sort of irrepressible love for Hazlitt, on account of his sympathy with mankind, his unmercenary disinterestedness, and his suffering; and I should have a still greater and more personal affection for him if he would let one; but I declare to God I never seem to know whether he is pleased or displeased, cordial or uncordial—indeed, his manners are never cordial—and he has a way with him, when first introduced to you, and ever afterwards, as if he said, 'I have no faith in anything, especially your advances: don't you flatter yourself you have any road to my credulity: we have nothing in common between us.' Then you escape into a corner, and your conversation is apt to be as sarcastic and incredulous about all the world as your manner. Now, egregious fop as you have made me out in your book, with my jealousy of anything bigger than a leaf, and other marvels—who is to be fop enough to suppose that any

efforts of his can make you more comfortable? Or how can you so repel one, and then expect, not that we should make no efforts (for those we owe you on other accounts), but that it could possibly enter our heads you took our omissions so much to heart? The tears came into the eyes of this heartless coxcomb when he read the passage in your letter where you speak of not having a soul to stand by you. I was very ill, I confess, at the time, and you may lay it to that account. I was also very ill on Thursday night, when I took up your book to rest my wits in, after battling all day with the most dreadful nervousness. This, and your attack on Mr. Shelley, which I must repeat was most outrageous, unnecessary, and even, for its professed purposes, impolitic, must account for my letter. But I will endeavour to break the force of that blow in another manner, if I can. As to the other points in your letter, if you wish me to say anything about them—everybody knows what I think of Godwin's behaviour and of your magnanimity to boot, in such matters. But in sparing and assisting Godwin, you need not have helped him to drive irons into Shelley's soul. Reynolds is a machine I don't see the meaning of. As to Lamb, I must conclude that he abstained from speaking of you, either because you cut so at Coleridge, or from thinking that his good word would really be of no service to you. Of the 'execution' you may remember what I have said; but I was assured again on Saturday that Bentham knew nothing of *it*. How can you say I 'shirked' out of Blackwood's business, when I took all the pains I could

to make that raff and coward, Z,* come forward? But I will leave these and other matters to talk over when I see you, when I will open myself more to you than I have done, seeing that it may not be indifferent to you for me to do so. At any rate, as I mean this in kindness, oblige me in one matter, and one only, and take some early opportunity of doing justice to the talents and *generous qualities* of Shelley, whatever you may think of his mistakes in using them. The attack on me is a trifle compared with it, nor should I allude to it again but to say, and to say most honestly, that you might make five more if you would only relieve the more respectable part of my chagrin and impatience in that matter. You must imagine what I feel at bottom with regard to yourself, when I tell you that there is but one other person from whom I could have at all borne this attack on Shelley; but in one respect that only makes it the less bearable.

"Yours sincerely,

"L. H."

The next tidings we get of the business is in the correspondence of Hunt and Shelley. In a letter from Leigh Hunt to his friend, of the 10th May, 1821, the subject is thus touched upon:—

"You may have heard also that Hazlitt, after his usual fashion towards those whom he likes, and gets impatient with, has been attacking Shelley, myself, and everybody else, the public included, though there

* Lockhart.

his liking stops. *I wrote him an angry letter about S.*—[these italics are mine]—the first one I ever did, and I believe he is sorry: but this is his way. Next week perhaps he will write a panegyric upon him. He says that Shelley provokes him by his going to a *pernicious* extreme on the Liberal side, and so hurting it. I asked him what good he would do the said side by publicly abusing the supporters of it, and caricaturing them? To *this* he answers nothing. I told him I would not review his book, as I must quarrel with him publicly if I did so, and so hurt the cause further. Besides, I was not going to give publicity to his outrages. I am sorry for it on every account, because I really believe Hazlitt to be a disinterested and suffering man, who feels public calamities as other men do private ones, and this is perpetually redeeming him in my eyes. I told him so, as well as some other things; but you shall see our correspondence by-and-by. Did Shelley ever cut him up at Godwin's table? Somebody says so, and [that] this is the reason of Hazlitt's attack. I know that Hazlitt does *pocket* up wrongs in this way, to draw them out again some day or other. He says it is the only comfort which the friends of his own cause leave him."

In a later letter to Shelley (August 28, 1821), Leigh Hunt returns to the topic, in consequence seemingly of something or other that Shelley had let fall in reply. He says: "I took an opportunity, a few weeks back, of mentioning you in one of my political articles [in the *Examiner*] in company with Hazlitt, and in such a way as showed how I valued your heart and genius, as well

as his talents. It was nothing of a comparison. I was only mentioning the authors who would and who would not be in a new Literary Royal Academy, which they talk of getting up. But those who know Hazlitt's book (not a great many, for he is not popular) will see how little effect these idle fightings with his side of the question have upon us. As to the rest, if he attacks you again, I have told him in so many words that he must expect me to be his public antagonist. But I think it pretty certain that he will not, and that, if he speaks of you again, it will even be in another manner. The way in which you talk of him is just what I expected of you."

It happened, however, that Mr. Hazlitt was not in the slightest degree deterred by Mr. Leigh Hunt's representations from expressing in print what his opinion was of Mr. Shelley *as a writer*. It was not in my grandfather's character to draw back or recant *under such circumstances*, and in the 'Edinburgh Review' for July, 1824, was a criticism on Shelley's 'Posthumous Poems,' not harshly or unfairly written, but written in a spirit of dissent from the school and class of poetry of which this author was the archetype. I cannot find that any notice was taken by Mr. Hunt of this, but in the 'New Monthly Magazine' for August, 1826, Mr. Hazlitt attacked Shelley in a manner which led to a correspondence between Mr. Hunt and the ostensible editor, Mr. T. Campbell. This latter individual, of whom Mr. Hazlitt, regardless of his (Campbell's) notorious dislike to him, had spoken most handsomely

in the 'Spirit of the Age,' had no real responsibility or control, it seems, in the conduct of the periodical with which his name was connected. He probably never took the trouble to look at any article before it appeared, and Mr. Hazlitt's business communications, if any, were addressed to Mr. Colburn himself. On the present occasion, in a letter of August 11th, 1826, Mr. Campbell expressed his regret for the "detestable passage in Mr. Hazlitt's paper," and pleaded guilty to "culpable negligence in not rejecting what related to Mr. S." He supposed, however, that he was "stupefied by *the fatigue of reading over a long roll of articles.*" He concludes: "The oversight, nevertheless, I expect, was blamable, and I am justly punished for it by finding myself *under the catspaw of Hazlitt's calumny.*"

Now, if anybody desires to qualify himself to appreciate this tissue of nonsense and falsehood, he may go to two books, of which one is well known, and the other deserves, with all its faults, to be better so—Mr. Redding's 'Recollections,' and Mr. Patmore's 'Friends and Acquaintance.' There he will see to what amount of *fatigue* Mr. Campbell was exposed in "reading over a long roll of articles."

I have permitted myself to anticipate events, and to show in one view the commencement and termination of this controversy, because Mr. Leigh Hunt's name is not one which will occur again very often or very prominently in these memoirs. What I have further to observe of the relations between these distinguished contemporaries, I must reserve for another opportunity.

The temporary and private soreness of feeling on Mr. Hunt's part did not affect Mr. Hazlitt's connection with the *Examiner*, to which he was still a contributor from time to time, though much more sparingly than of old. An essay on 'Guy Faux' from his pen appeared in the paper this very year of the short-lived rupture.

It was Lamb who suggested this subject to him, and he says, "I urged him to execute it." As Lamb would not, he entered on the task.

The writer's object was to make something more than a fifth-November puppet out of Guy: to set his hero before the world in more respectable colours. It was a subject which had been started years and years before at Lamb's. There is a description of one of the celebrated Wednesday Evenings, as early as 1806, at which the theme was broached; and Lamb is made by my grandfather to instance Guy Faux and Judas Iscariot as two persons "he would like to have seen."*

The articles in the *Examiner*, however, were the first to appear in print, and from the novelty of the thing, and the sort of reputation the writer had for casting new lights on old theories, it promised well.

Curiously enough, a few months afterwards (Nov. 1823) Lamb capped the *Examiner* 'Guy Faux' with a *London Magazine* 'Guy Faux.' The subject had been allowed to sleep thus far, and now in the same year two of the principal authors of the day emptied out their thoughts about this redoubtable and not improbably much-maligned individual upon paper. Lamb was, no doubt,

* See p. 289 of this volume.

led to employ his pen on this service by reading Mr. Hazlitt's observations in the *Examiner*, for he commences with these words: "A very ingenious and subtle writer, whom there is good reason for suspecting to be an ex-Jesuit, not unknown at Douay some five-and-twenty years since . . . . about a twelvemonth back set himself to prove the character of the Powder-Plot conspirators to have been that of heroic self-devotedness and true Christian martyrdom. Under the mask of Protestant candour he actually gained admission for his treatise into a London weekly paper. . ."

But my grandfather's 'Guy Faux' has never yet been reprinted (a fault to be amended), nor was Lamb's 'Guy Faux' till very lately, and then in America. It was an ungenteel topic. It smelled of Jacobinism. It might have been perhaps thought, if the two 'Guy Fauxes,' coming out so close one upon the other, had been reprinted in octavo with 'Elia' and 'Table Talk,' that Mr. Lamb and Mr. Hazlitt were in the pay of the Catholics.

THE END OF VOL. I.

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